Access to Educational Opportunity in Rural Communities: Alternative Patterns of Delivering Vocational Education in Sparsely Populated Areas

Volume 2: The Heartland Vocational Center: A Decentralized Center

Ruth G. Thomas
Roland L. Peterson
Rick Rabideau

Station Bulletin AD-SB-2714
Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Minnesota 1985

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: ALTERNATIVE PATTERNS OF DELIVERING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

Volume 2: The Heartland Vocational Center: A Decentralized Center

Ruth G. Thomas
Roland L. Peterson
M. Jane Anderson

AD-SB 2714
Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Minnesota
1985

Ruth G. Thomas and Roland L. Peterson are associate professor of home economics education and professor of agricultural education, respectively, at the University of Minnesota, 325 Vocational Education Building, 1954 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108. M. Jane Anderson was a research assistant for this project.

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES:
ALTERNATIVE PATTERNS OF DELIVERING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

Volume 1: Problem, Study Design and Procedures, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations. Thomas, R. and Peterson, R.

Volume 2: The Heartland Vocational Center: A Decentralized Center. Thomas, R.; Peterson, R.; Anderson, M.J.

Volume 3: The Northwest Multi-District: A Mobile Facilities Center. Peterson, R.; Thomas, R.; Anderson, M.J.

Volume 4: The Inter-district Cooperative Center: A Centralized Center. Peterson, R.; Thomas, R.; Rabideau, R.; Anderson, M.J.

Volume 5: The Clay-Wayne County Joint Agreement: A Decentralized Noncenter Agreement. Thomas, R.; Peterson, R.; Rabideau, R.

Volume 6: Glencoe, Lester Prairie, Brownton: A Centralized, Noncenter Agreement. Peterson, R.; Thomas, R.; Rabideau, R.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was supported by funds from the University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station. The researchers express sincere thanks to Richard Sauer, director of the Station, for his support of this project.

Thanks are also due to: Mr. James Hofer, the director of the Heartland Center, who hosted the research team, provided useful data and reviewed the final report; the superintendents and principals in the Pine River School District (#117), the Backus School District (#114) and the Pequot Lakes School District (#186) who also provided useful data and information regarding the cooperative center; the vocational agriculture teacher and home economics teachers at Pine River and Backus who shared valuable information for the case study; the guidance counselors, parents advisory committee members and students in each of these cooperating schools who contributed information and insights concerning the center. Without the support and input of these individuals, this case study would not have been completed.

The efforts of the following individuals were also essential in the preparation of this volume: Drs. Charles Sederberg, professor of educational policy and administration and Dario Menanteau, associate professor of rural sociology at the University of Minnesota who provided reviews of the manuscript; Marcia Milburn, who typed the original manuscript; LaRayne Kuehl, Connie Rime, Mary Gupta, Pat Noeldner, Merri Fromm, Minnesota Research and Development Center, Department of Vocational and Technical Education, who revised the manuscript on the word processor, and John Colmey, Agricultural Experiment Station, for editing the manuscript.

CHAPTER I

STUDY BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND METHOD

The Heartland case study is one of a series of case studies completed between 1980 and 1983 under a project sponsored by the University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station. These case studies were part of an inquiry begun in 1978 to address the problem of access of rural students to vocational education through inter-school district cooperation.

The case studies had four purposes: 1) identify, describe, and analyze means of delivering vocational education in sparsely populated rural areas that involve cooperation among school districts; 2) provide an information base relevant to state and local policy questions regarding such programs; 3) make recommendations regarding the appropriateness of each form of cooperation studied for various community and geographical settings; and 4) generate concepts and hypotheses to guide further study and development of educational delivery in sparsely populated rural areas. Each case study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the essential features of this form of inter-school district cooperation?

2. How does the cooperative arrangement work? What factors seem to facilitate or impede its operation and the maintenance of cooperation between school districts?

3. How does the cooperative arrangement fit with the characteristics of its setting (i.e., with geographical, community and school district characteristics)?

4. What consequences does the cooperative arrangement have for educational access and quality?

5. How might the cooperative arrangement be modified?

While there are several existing and potential approaches to delivering vocational education to varied audiences in sparsely populated rural areas, the case studies in this series are limited to approaches that are managed by school districts, serve secondary students, and involve cooperation among school districts. The portion of the case studies concerned with specific vocational programs focuses on agriculture and home economics programs.

The general model from which the case studies were generated is presented in Figure 1. Only the portion of Figure 1 which concerns cooperative school patterns is addressed by this series of case studies. The Heartland case study represents an example of the decentralized variation of the center cooperative school pattern. Relevant literature was reviewed and the model presented in Figure 1 was formulated in an earlier publication (Peterson, et al., 1981).

Case study methodology was used for developing a general understanding of inter-school district cooperation because it provides detailed description based on in-depth observation and can uncover underlying factors unlikely to be discovered using less intensive methodologies. However, it also limits the generalizability of the data. The trade-off seemed appropriate given the goal of understanding the patterns of inter-school district cooperation and the sparse knowledge regarding the delivery of vocational education in rural areas. Potentially critical variables must be identified before they can be studied using research methods that lead to broadly generalizable results.

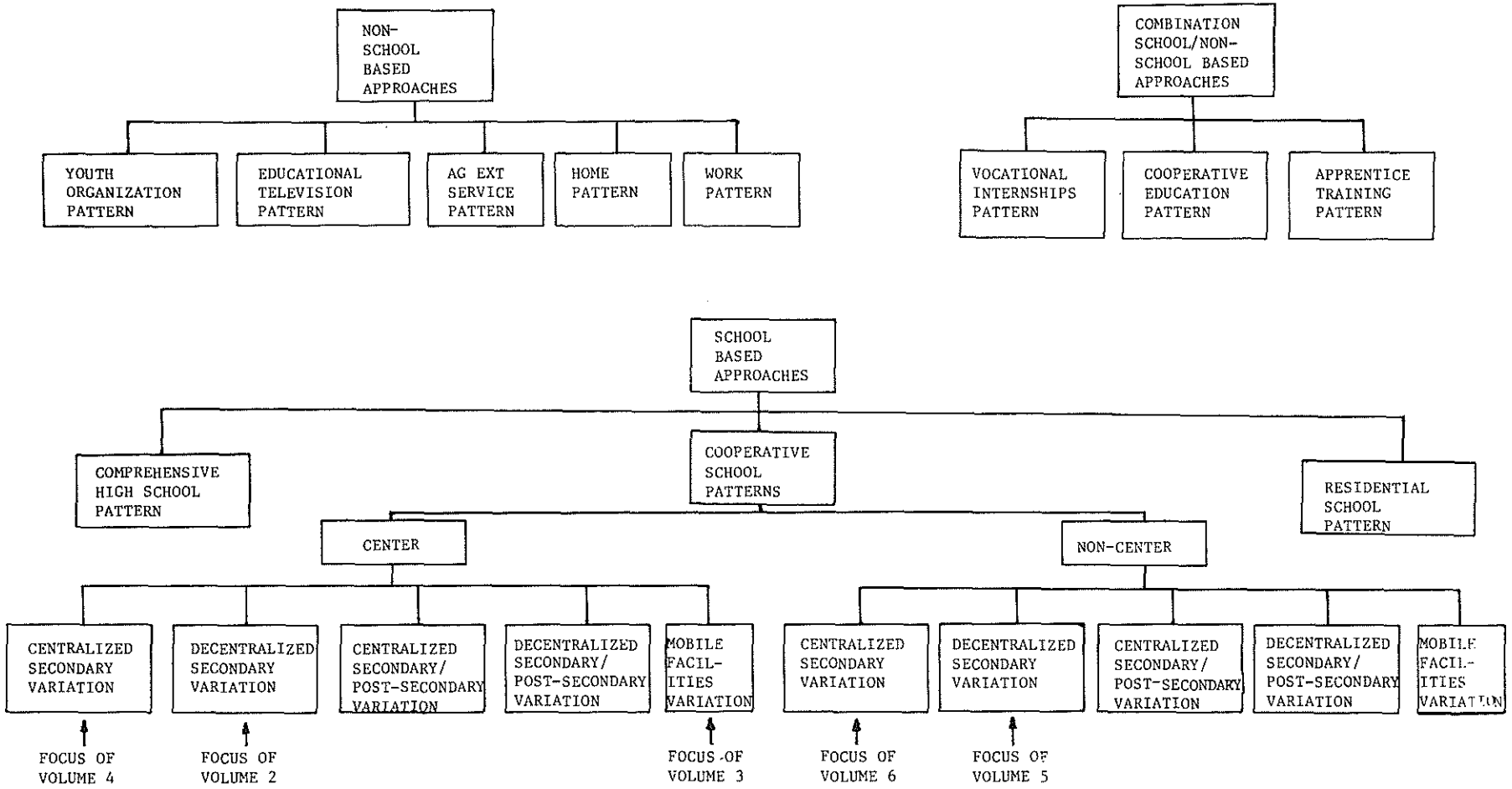


Figure 1. Conceptual model of approaches, patterns and variations for delivering vocational education

PROGRAM INPUTS	SCHOOL INPUTS	COMMUNITY INPUTS
curriculum	governance	size
program size	total curriculum	population density
travel involved	school size	geographical location
facilities	school facilities	cultural/ethnic character
student	students	socioeconomic character
age	college/vocational orientation	tax base
attitude	families	unemployment rate
grade level	special needs	poverty level
prior education	dropout rates	average age
dropout rate	school district	educational level
ethnicity	administration	mobility
program administration	budget resource base	employment opportunities
program staff	school schedules	educational opportunities
size	school staff	
qualifications	size	
attitudes	qualifications	
teaching loads	attitudes	
cost	policies	
schedules		
advisory groups		
student organization		
policies		

STUDENT OUTCOMES	COMMUNITY OUTCOMES
skills and abilities	trained personnel available
attitudes	program and school knowledge
future plans	program and school relationships
future placement	

Figure 2. Input and outcome variables relevant to vocational education delivery patterns.

Instruments and data collection procedures were developed to address the variables listed in Figure 2. These variables were selected on the basis of a literature review presented earlier (Peterson et al., 1981). The relationships among the research questions, data collected, data sources, and the data collection methods are presented in Table 1. One set of instruments, which required data from records and other descriptive information, was sent to the site for completion prior to the site visit. A second set of instruments was used to guide on-site observations and interviews with school personnel and community members. Instruments, study design, and procedures were pilot-tested in February and March 1980.

Study sites were chosen by locating delivery systems fitting the conceptual model in Figure 1 through a selected state and comprehensive national survey. The pool of potential sites was limited to small rural school districts which offered both agriculture and home economics programs since the delivery of these vocational programs in sparsely populated areas was of particular interest. Further criteria in site selection included willingness of school officials and others at the site to be involved in the study and accessibility within resource constraints of the project.

All selected sites contacted agreed to participate, although in some instances individual school districts did not participate in the full-scale data collection. Interviews

Table 1. Research questions, data to be obtained, source(s) of data and method of data collection.

Research Questions	Data to be Obtained	Data Source(s)	Method of Data Collection
1. What are the essential features of this form of inter-school district cooperation?	1. Number of facility locations	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s) and direct observation	Interviews, on-site observations
	2. Type of governance structure	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s) and governance documents	Interviews, on-site observations, document analysis
	3. Structure, responsibility and role of administrative staff	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s) and governance documents	Interviews, document analysis
	4. Structure and responsibility of teaching staff	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s) and teaching staff	Interviews, questionnaires
	5. Financial structure(s)	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s), policymakers and agreement documents	Interviews, questionnaires, document analysis
	6. Nature of legal agreements between schools	Agreement documents	Document analysis
	7. Approval mechanisms	Agreement documents, state Dept. of Education	Document analysis, interviews
	8. Transportation patterns	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s)	Interviews, questionnaires
	9. Vocational curriculum	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s), student handbook	Interviews, questionnaires, document analysis

Table 1, cont'd.

Research questions, data to be obtained, source(s) of data and method of data collection

Research Questions	Data to be Obtained	Data Source(s)	Method of Data Collection
2. How does the cooperative arrangement work? What factors seem to facilitate or impede its operation and the maintenance of cooperation between school districts?	1. Communication networks among schools	Cooperative arrangement administrator(s) teachers, agreement documents	Interviews, questionnaires, document analysis
	2. Perceived need for cooperation	Cooperative arrangement policymakers, school administrators, community members, teachers	Interviews, questionnaires
	3. Perceived benefits from cooperation	Cooperative arrangement policymakers, school administrators, community members, teachers	Interviews, questionnaires
	4. Transportation	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators	Interviews, questionnaires
	5. Schedules	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators	Interviews, questionnaires
	6. Enrollments	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, state reports	Questionnaires, reports analysis
	7. Attitudes	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, policymakers, teachers, community members	Interviews, questionnaires
	8. Resources	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, policymakers, state reports	Questionnaires, interviews, report analysis

Table 1, Cont'd.

Research questions, data to be obtained, source(s) of data and method of data collection.

Research Questions	Data to be Obtained	Data Source(s)	Method of Data Collection
3. How does the cooperative arrangement fit with the characteristics of its setting (i.e., with geographical, community and school district characteristics)?	1. Attitudes toward education	School administrators, teachers, policy-makers, community members, students, parents	Interviews, questionnaires
	2. Resources provided to school	State-generated reports	Report analysis
	3. Future education and career plans of high school graduates	School counselors, students, parents	Interviews, questionnaires
	4. Community demography, cultural and ethnic background	U. S. Census, State Dept. of Economic Security	Document analysis
	5. Community resources	State Dept. of Economic Security, local telephone book, direct observations	Document analysis, on-site observations
	6. Community economic patterns	State Dept. of Economic Security, U. S. Census	Document analysis
	7. Community health statistics	State Dept. of Public Health	Document analysis
	8. Physical geography	Direct observation	On-site observation
	9. Transportation systems available	State Dept. of Economic Security, maps	Document analysis
	10. School district enrollments, class size	State reports, school administrators	Report analysis, questionnaires
	11. School district income, expenditures	State reports	Report analysis, questionnaires
	12. School district faculty and administration size, qualifications	School administrators	Questionnaires

Table 1. (cont'd.) Research Questions, Data to be Obtained, Sources(s) of Data and Method of Data Collection

Research Questions	Data to be Obtained	Data Source(s)	Method of Data Collection
	13. School district facilities	School administrators, direct observation	Questionnaires, interviews, on-site observation
	14. School district schedules	School administrators	Questionnaires, interviews
	15. School district curricula	Student handbook	Document analysis
	16. School district student transportation patterns	School administrators	Questionnaires, interviews
4. What consequences does the cooperative arrangement have for educational access and quality?	1. Access		
	a. Number of students enrolled in cooperative delivery mechanisms	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, teachers	Questionnaires, interviews
	b. Curriculum available to students	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, handbooks, reports	Questionnaires, interviews document analysis
	c. Transportation requirements for students	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators	Interviews, questionnaires
	d. Schedules	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, faculty	Interviews, questionnaires
	2. Quality		
	a. Student organization functioning	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, teachers	Interviews
	b. Faculty qualifications	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, faculty	Interviews, questionnaires
	c. Facilities	Cooperative arrangement and school administrators, faculty, direct observation	Interviews, questionnaires, on-site observation

[1]Research question five is not included in the table since it involves extension from and interpretation of the data rather than data collection.

were scheduled by school personnel in advance of the site visit. The site visit involved a team of three researchers who spent one to three days conducting interviews and observing the cooperative arrangement in action. Interviews were conducted with vocational directors, school superintendents, principals, school board members, vocational program advisory committee members, home economics and agriculture teachers, school counselors, and parents of students. State guidelines and legal structures were obtained from state department of education staff.

A profile of the setting was constructed on the basis of data obtained from the U.S. Census, state agencies, on-site observations, and pre-visit questionnaires. Data from the 1980 U.S. Census were not available at the time site profiles were developed, so 1970 census data were used and supplemented by more recent data from state and other Federal agencies. In some instances, data comparable across years and communities were unavailable.

Data presented here were collected in May 1980. A comparative analysis of all five case studies is presented in Volume 1 of this series (see p. ii) and provides an analytical discussion of the significance and implications of the descriptive information contained in each of the case studies.

CHAPTER II

SETTING

Political Setting

This chapter provides descriptive information about the setting in which the Heartland Vocational Center was located. Aspects of the setting described include geography, population size, educational, racial and health characteristics, economic and agricultural characteristics and community services. Data presented focus on the decade of the 1970's, the period in which the Heartland Vocational Center was initiated and developed. Data regarding the setting were drawn from existing data available in the U.S. Census and various state agency reports. Most of the data is provided on a county basis, although in a few instances community level data is included. The purpose of the setting profile is to present the demographic, economic, and social milieu in which the Heartland Center existed in order to understand the relationships between forms of inter-school district cooperation and their settings.

Two Minnesota statutes provided the basis for the formal cooperation between school districts represented by a vocational center. Chapter 252 of Minnesota Laws, 1974, provided for the establishment of public corporations called cooperative centers for vocational education. Minnesota Statute, Section 471.59, passed and refined in the late 1960's, provided the opportunity for school districts to cooperate. Some centers, including the Heartland Center, were initiated in the state prior to 1974.

The cooperative vocational center legislation allowed two or more school districts to enter into an agreement to establish a cooperative center to provide for vocational education and other educational services upon the vote of a majority of the full membership of each of the boards entering into the agreement. The law provided for the creation of a center board and required representation from each participating school district on this board. Powers given to the center board included general charge of the business of the center, ownership of facilities, initiation of curriculum offerings, employment of teachers, and contracting of other services. The center board was not given the power to issue bonds; instead, the board was given the power to assess participating school districts for their share of all expenses, capital expenditures, and indebtedness associated with the center (Laws of Minnesota for 1974, p. 387).

Under the cooperative center law, educational programs were to be provided through centers for high school and adult phases of vocational instruction. The high school phase was to be offered as an integral part of the comprehensive curriculum offered by each participating school district. Students were to graduate from their resident high school districts.

As a public corporation, the center board had the power to receive and disburse federal, state, and local funds made available to it. The formula for assessing school districts their proportionate share of expenses was not specified beyond requiring an equitable distribution formula agreed upon by the participating districts and approved by the State Commissioner of Education and State Board for Vocational Education.

State Board of Education approval of the agreement between school districts was required for the initiation of a center. The addition of school districts to center membership required approval of a majority of the board of the district concerned, the center board, and the state board of education. Withdrawal of a school district from the center required approval of a majority of the board of the school district concerned and compliance with provisions in the agreement establishing the center. Withdrawal could not be effective until the end of the school year following the year in which the intent to withdraw was communicated and did not release the withdrawing district from liability for bonded indebtedness it incurred prior to the effective withdrawal date.

The earlier Minnesota law underlying vocational centers, but also providing for non-center forms of inter-school district cooperation (M.S. 471.59), was the Joint Exercise of Powers statute. This law allowed two or more governmental units (including school districts), by agreement entered into through action of their governing bodies, to jointly or cooperatively exercise any power common to the contracting bodies. This law required an agreement between the units but did not require a joint board or approval by state regulating bodies. Parties to the agreement were given the authority to disburse public funds in an unspecified manner, the only restrictions being those to which the participating parties as single units were already subject. Provisions for termination of agreements and distribution of property were addressed in general terms with few specific provisions.

With these legal structures in place and Minnesota Department of Education policies supporting their development, the number of centers grew rapidly in Minnesota during the 1970's. The economic slump in the early 1980's brought a halt to this growth and existing centers began to dissolve as school districts withdrew their membership. In some cases, school districts who had been members of centers rejoined together under more informal non-center arrangements.

Geography

The Heartland vocational center was formed in 1972 as a means of offering vocational education programs to students in a north central region of Minnesota known as the "lake country".

The entire Heartland area of Minnesota includes Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Hubbard, Cass, Crow Wing, Todd, Sherburn, Morrison, Milaca, Stearns and Barton counties. Largely a recreation area, it contains over 5,000 camping sites, nearly 1,000 resorts, 50 golf courses, 5 downhill ski areas, nearly 400 miles of cross country ski trails, 1,700 miles of snowmobile trails, and thousands of acres of federal, state, and county lands open to public hunting. The Leech Lake Indian Reservation is located in Cass county.

Three communities were originally involved in the Heartland Secondary Vocational Center. Two of the communities, Pine River and Backus, are located in Cass county. The third, Pequot Lakes, is located in Crow Wing county. All three communities are located along a 15 mile stretch of Highway 371 between Brainerd and Walker (Figure 3).

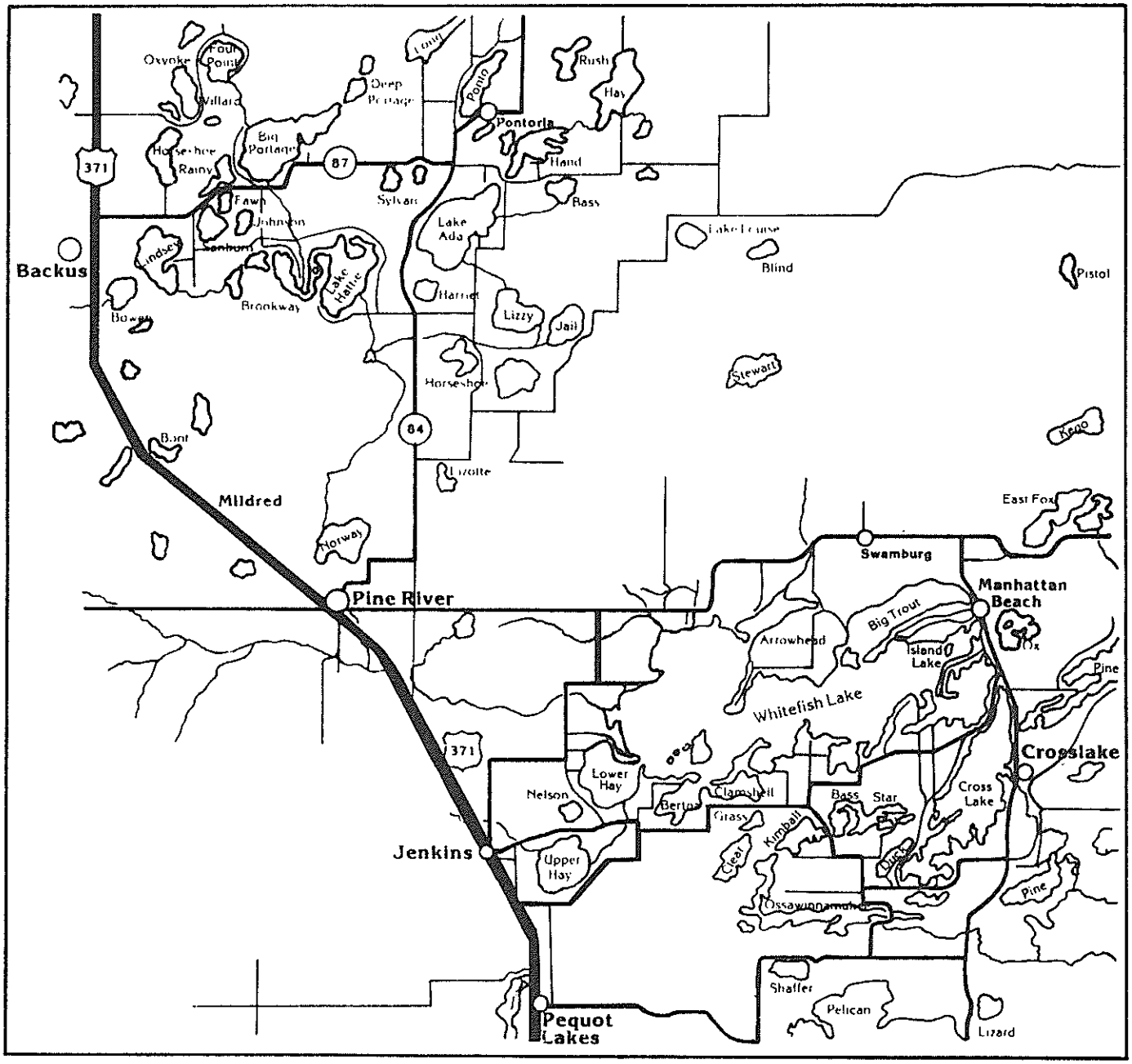
Flat to rolling topography characterizes the area. Most land areas that have been cleared are bordered by coniferous and deciduous trees native to the area. Sandy loam, forest type, shallow soils surround these communities and produce adequate crops when rainfall is sufficient. An influx of hobby-type farms has developed in the area. In general, the area is a mixture of resorts and summer residences, farms and forest product industries.

Population Size, Age, and Sex Characteristics

Data presented in this and other sections of the report focus on the decade of the 1970's, the period in which the Heartland Center was initiated and developed. Population trends for Cass and Crow Wing counties are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 indicates that population in both counties increased after 1960 with increases projected to the end of the century. The rate of increase in population size for both counties rose sharply during the 1970's. The population for Crow Wing county has been about twice that of Cass County since 1960.

Table 3 indicates that much of the increase in population for the two counties during the 1970's was due to in-migration, reflecting the influx of hobby farmers and resort-type residences referred to earlier. Crow Wing county also experienced some population growth due to a higher birth than death rate.



Source: Lake Area Information

Figure 3. Map of the Heartland Vocational Center geographic area.

Table 2. Population trends and projections for Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1979.

Year	County Population Trends and Projections					
	Cass			Crow Wing		
	N	Difference	Percent Change	N	Difference	Percent Change
1950	19,468			30,875		
		-2,748	-14.1		+1,259	+ 4.0
1960	16,720			32,134		
		+ 580	+ 3.5		+2,666	+ 8.3
1970	17,300			34,800		
		+4,500	+26.0		+6,500	+18.7
1980	21,800			41,300		
		+2,500	+11.5		+4,900	+11.9
*1990	24,300			46,200		
		+1,500	+ 6.2		+4,400	+ 9.5
*2000	25,800			50,600		

Source: Minnesota Demographer, State Planning Agency, Revised Population Projections for Minnesota Counties, May, 1979.

* Projected figures

Table 3. Factors affecting population change in Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1970-78.

Population Factors	County			
	Cass		Crow Wing	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Births	+2,100	--	+4,500	--
Deaths	-2,100	--	-3,500	--
Total Change	0	0.0	+1,000	+2.8
Migration	3,400	+19.9	4,300	+12.4
Total Change	+3,400	+19.9	+4,300	+12.4
Population Change 1970-1978	+3,400	+19.9	+5,300	+15.2

Source: Minnesota Demographic, State Planning Agency, Population Estimates for Minnesota Counties, 1978, July, 1979.

Population trends for the three communities involved in the Heartland Center reflect county growth trends. However, the extent of growth differs appreciably among the communities. Table 4 shows that, from 1970 to 1977, population in Backus increased only 4.3 percent while that of Pine River increased 13.9 percent. Pequot Lakes experienced the largest population growth during these years with a 34.1 percent increase.

Table 4. Population trends for Backus, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes, 1950-1977.

	Cass County		Crow Wing County
Population Trends	Backus	Pine River	Pequot Lakes
1950 (N)	*	835	552
1960 (N)	*	775	461
1950-60 Percent Change	*	-7.2%	-16.5%
1960 (N)	*	775	461
1970 (N)	257	803	499
1960-70 Percent Change	*	+3.5%	+ 7.6%
1970 (N)	257	803	499
1977 (N)	268	915	669
Percent Change	4.3%	13.9%	34.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Population Estimates and Projections, Series P-25, Nos. 762 and 836, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979.

* Data unavailable

Population composition estimates in terms of age and sex for Cass and Crow Wing counties are reported in Table 5. These data reflect that in 1975 almost a third of the population was under 18, half of the population was between 18 and 65, and almost one-fifth of the population was 65 and over.

Table 6 indicates that four-fifths of the residents of Cass and Crow Wing counties who were 25 years of age and older were classified as rural nonfarm and one-fifth were classified as rural farm in the 1970 census. Farm population includes those persons living on land tracts of ten or more acres from which sales of farm products amounted to $50 or more in the preceding calendar year or on land tracts of less than ten acres from which sales of farm products amounted to $250 or more in the preceding year. Rural nonfarm population includes persons not classifiable as farm population as well as persons living in group quarters, on institutional grounds, or in summer camps or motels. The high proportion of rural nonfarm population reflects the terrain, soil type, and the large expanses of public lands in this region.

Table 5. Population estimates by age and sex for Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1975.

Age Range	County Population By Sex Classification											
	Cass County						Crow Wing County					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 18	3040	15.6	2920	15.0	5960	30.6	6290	16.2	5910	15.2	12200	31.4
18-64 years	4830	24.7	5080	26.1	9910	50.9	10040	26.0	10970	28.4	21010	54.4
65 & over	1760	9.0	1850	9.5	3610	18.5	2510	6.5	2970	7.7	5480	14.2
Total	9630	49.4	9850	50.6	19480	100.0	18840	48.7	19850	51.3	38690	100.0

Source: Adapted from Minnesota Demographer, Age Estimates for Minnesota Counties, April, 1979.

Table 6. Number and percent rural farm and nonfarm population, persons 25 years of age and over in Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1970.

County	Farm		Non-Farm		Total
	N	Percent	N	Percent	
Cass	1996	19.2	8381	80.8	10377
Crow Wing	2684	20.9	10186	79.1	12870
Total	4680	20.1	18567	79.9	23247

Source: Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota, Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Educational Characteristics

Post-secondary educational opportunities were available within a 20-75 mile radius of the three communities. An area vocational technical school and a community college were available in Brainerd, located 20-30 miles from the three communities. Bemidji State University, 65-75 miles away, was the closest four-year post-secondary institution offering undergraduate and graduate level programs.

Table 7 portrays the educational background of the population 25 years of age and older in Cass and Crow Wing counties. This table indicates that the two counties were very similar in median years of schooling completed.

Table 7. Median school years completed by rural farm and nonfarm population 25 years of age and older in Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1970.

County	Farm	Nonfarm
Cass	10.0	10.7
Crow Wing	10.7	11.5

Source: Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota. Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Economic Characteristics

Table 8 indicates the median family income for Cass and Crow Wing counties and the percent of families with incomes below poverty level and above $15,000. Cass county had a lower median income in 1970 than did Crow Wing county; the median income for both counties was lower than the Minnesota average. The proportion of the population below poverty level in Cass county was greater than that for Crow Wing county; both counties had a higher proportion of families below the poverty level and a lower proportion of families with incomes of $15,000 or more than did the state as a whole. Table 8 reflects the marginal farming operations in this geographic area and the relatively high rate of unemployment reflected in Table 10.

Table 8. Family income in Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1970.

County	Median Income (Dollars)	Percent of Families with Income of	
		Less Than Poverty Level	$15,000 or more
Cass	$5,828	21.4	7.8
Crow Wing	$7,790	11.6	10.2
Minnesota Average	$9,931	8.2	20.3

Source: Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota, Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Rates of employment in manufacturing industries and white collar occupations in Cass and Crow Wing counties were below that for Minnesota in 1970, while rates of employment in government were above that for Minnesota. These employment rates by occupational categories are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Percent of population employed in various categories of occupations, 1970.

County	Percentage of Employed Persons		
	In Manufacturing Industries	In White Collar Occupations	In Government Work
Cass	12.9	40.8	25.9
Crow Wing	14.3	44.3	23.4
Minnesota Average	21.1	48.5	15.1

Source: Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota, Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Table 10 presents county labor force characteristics. Employment patterns differed markedly for men and women. More males than females participated in the civilian labor force. Unemployment rates for women were below those for men. In 1979 data for individual communities indicated an unemployment rate of 6.8 percent for Pequot Lakes and 4.5 percent for Pine River.

Table 11 portrays the occupational categories of the employed civilian labor force as distributed by sex. For males, the most predominant occupational categories were craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers, operatives, including transportation, and managers and administrators, except farm. The least represented occupational categories among males were farm laborers, unpaid family workers, farm laborers (except unpaid and farm foremen) and clerical and kindred workers. For females, predominant occupational categories were service workers (except private household), clerical and kindred workers, and professional, technical, and kindred workers.

Some seasonal shifts in labor force employment and unemployment were reflected in more detailed labor force data not reported here. The highest unemployment rates were reported during the first quarter (January, February, and March) and the last quarter (October, November, December) of the year, reflecting the seasonal labor demand of the resort, farm, and construction industries, as well as the seasonal maintenance requirements of the area's public lands.

Data concerning major employers in the communities of Pine River and Pequot Lakes are presented in Table 12. Industries represented by the major employers in these two communities include services, finance, insurance, manufacturing, utilities, and communications. Education ranks high in both counties in terms of the number of people employed; it is the largest employer when both counties are considered together. The range in number of employees for Breezy Point, Inc. reflects the seasonal character of the resort industry, despite the fact that Breezy Point is a year round resort. Backus' single major employer was a manufacturer of septic tanks and travel trailers, employing 25-49 employees.

Table 10: Number of employed and unemployed males and females, Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1970.

Employment Status	Cass County		Crow Wing County	
	N	%	N	%
Males				
Employed	3098	90.5	4262	87.7
Unemployed	327	9.5	595	12.3
Total Male Labor Force, 16 and Older	3425	100.0	4857	100.0
Females				
Employed	1687	93.9	2237	91.1
Unemployed	109	6.1	219	8.9
Total Female Labor Force, 16 and Older	1796	100.0	2456	100.0
Total				
Employed	4785	91.6	6499	88.9
Unemployed	436	8.4	814	11.1
Total Labor Force, 16 Years and Older	5221	100.0	7313	100.0

Source: Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota, Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Table 11. Number of male and female workers in various occupations.

Occupational Areas	Cass County		Crow Wing Co.		Total Both Counties	Percent of Total
	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm	Rural Farm	Rural Non-Farm		
Male employed, 16 years old and over	689	2409	917	3345	7360	100.0
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	35	306	77	389	807	11.0
Managers & administrators, except farm	31	416	58	464	969	15.2
Sales workers	6	124	32	221	383	5.2
Clerical & kindred workers	36	84	22	137	279	3.8
Craftsmen, foremen, & kindred workers	95	480	178	866	1619	22.0
Operatives, including transport	109	461	129	801	1500	20.4
Laborers, except farm	32	259	46	214	551	7.5
Farmers & farm managers	265	23	275	24	587	8.0
Farm laborers, unpaid family workers	20	-	5	-	25	0.3
Farm laborers, exc. unpaid, farm foremen	20	31	52	10	113	1.5
Service workers, including private household	40	225	43	219	527	7.2
Female employed, 16 years old and over	276	1411	399	1838	3924	100.0
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	47	195	80	328	650	16.6
Managers & administrators, except fafm	-	147	5	44	196	5.0
Sales workers	7	85	34	158	284	
Clerical & kindred workers	70	365	94	438	967	24.6
Operatives, including transportation	28	79	30	162	299	7.6
Other blue-collar workers	-	32	15	71	118	3.0
Farmers & farm managers	30	13	7	-	50	1.3
Farm laborers, unpaid family workers	-	-	-	-	0	0.0
Farm laborers, exc. unpaid & farm foremen	6	12	3	5	26	0.7
Service workers, except private household	78	446	111	592	1227	31.3
Private household workers	10	37	20	40	107	2.7

Source: Bureau of the Census. General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota, Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Table 12. Major employers and number of employees in Pequot Lakes and Pine River, 1979.

Firm	Product/Service	Number of Employees	Union	% of Employees in Union
Pine River				
Durkee Manufacturing Co.	Wood Reels	150	AFL/CIO	87
Pine River School District	Education	147	None	
Good Samaritan Home	Nursing Home Care	100	None	
Bueckers Red Owl Store	Grocery	21	None	
Carl's IGA Store	Grocery	16	None	
Pine River State Bank	Banking	15	None	
City of Pine River	Govt. Maintenance, Public Programs	14	None	
Minnesota Power and Light Co.	Utility	11	None	
Pequot Lakes				
Pequot Lakes Public School	Education	92	None	
Arvig Telephone Co.	Communications	31	None	
Lakeland State Bank	Banking, Insurance	25	None	
Breezy Point, Inc.	Year-round Resort	10-175	None	
Krietz Ind., Inc.	Tool & Die, Sheet Metal Forming & Assembly			

Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Minnesota County Labor Force Estimates. St. Paul: Research and Statistics Services Office, January-December, 1979.

Health and Social Characteristics

This section concerns health-related patterns and marital stability patterns of the population of Cass and Crow Wing counties. Data are presented with respect to disease, infant and maternal risks and death, and marriage establishment and dissolution. Because health and social characteristics are related to educational levels and economic characteristics of a population, these data are relevant to consider in the establishment and nature of educational opportunities.

Table 13 presents age and education characteristics of mothers giving birth to live infants in 1978 (the most recent year that data were available in summarized form). Both Cass and Crow Wing counties had a higher percentage of live births to mothers under 18 years of age with prenatal care beginning in the third trimester of pregnancy, or not at all, than did the state as a whole. Births involving mothers under 17 or over 40 years of age or who have had fewer than three medical prenatal care visits are associated with increased risk.

Regarding education level, a higher proportion of mothers in Cass and Crow Wing counties had less than twelve years of education than was true for the state as a whole, and a smaller proportion of mothers in these counties had more than three years of college than was true for the state as a whole. Mother's educational level is related to daughter's educational completion rate. Consequently, a lower educational completion rate among females can be expected where mother's educational completion rate is low.

Table 13. Live births to residents of Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1978: maternal age, education, and prenatal care patterns.

Characteristic	Cass County	Crow Wing County	Minnesota
Mother's Age, Percent			
Under 18	5.1	4.9	3.4
18-19	12.1	9.9	7.7
20 and over	1.0	0.8	0.7
Mother's Education, Percent			
Less than 12 years	23.7	15.7	11.1
Over 3 years college	10.6	12.8	16.0
Prenatal Care Began, Percent			
3rd Trimester or none	11.9	8.1	3.4
Prenatal Care Visits			
Median Number	7.9	8.4	10.6

Source: Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Health Statistics, 1978.

Table 14 portrays further natality statistics for county residents. Fertility rate refers to the number of live births per 1,000 women of ages 15 through 44 in the population. Live birth order is the order of live births to a mother including the current birth.

Table 14 indicates that the fertility rate in 1978 for Cass and Crow Wing counties exceeded the state's rate. These rates indicate that a higher proportion of child-bearing age women bore children in these two counties in 1978 than was true for the state as a whole.

Table 14. Profile of fertility and births, Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1978.

Characteristic	Cass County	Crow Wing County	Minnesota
Fertility Rate	84.6	79.9	66.7
Out-of-Wedlock Percent	18.9	10.4	10.4
Live Birth Order			
Median	2.5	2.3	2.3
Percent 5th or over	8.0	4.3	4.0
Prematurity, Percent			
Less than 37 weeks	7.4	7.0	7.1
2,500 grams or less	4.2	6.4	5.3

Source: Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Health Statistics, 1978.

Cass county differed in 1978 from Crow Wing county and the state of Minnesota on two additional dimensions of birth profiles. The percentage of out-of-wedlock births in Cass county (18.9 percent) exceeded the state's and Crow Wing county's rates by 8.5 percent. The percentage of live births to a given mother that were fifth births or more in Cass county (8.0 percent) exceeded the state's and Crow Wing county's rates by approximately 4 percent. The rate of premature births in terms of both age and weight of fetus was similar to that for the state in both counties.

Table 15 shows rates of birth defects, risks, injuries, and deaths occurring in the two counties and the state in 1978. High risk births include those where the mother's age is less than 17 or over 30 years, where prenatal visits have numbered less than three, where there is prolonged labor, where there is a birth weight of five pounds and eight ounces or less, where birth injury has occurred, where a birth condition and congenital anomaly is present, or where the mother exhibits serious health conditions such as tuberculosis, rubella, diabetes, or a cardiac condition. Birth injuries are injuries to the brain, spinal cord, fractures or other bone injuries, paralysis, or nerve injuries. The perinatal mortality rate identified in Table 15 refers to the number of fetal deaths of twenty weeks or more plus the number of neonatal deaths[1] per 1,000 live births.

Table 15. Profile of birth defects, risk, injuries, and deaths, Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1978.

	Cass County	Crow Wing County	Minnesota
High Risk Births, Percent	21.2	19.4	16.1
Congenital Anomalies, Percent	1.9	1.8	1.1
Birth Injuries, Percent	2.9	2.9	1.3
Perinatal Mortality Rate/1000	16.0	10.0	15.8

Source: Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Health Statistics, 1978

[1]Neonatal death is a death during the first four weeks of life.

Table 15 indicates that the rate of birth defects, risks, injuries, and deaths was higher in 1978 than for the state as a whole in each category for both counties with the exception of the perinatal mortality rate in Crow Wing county which was lower than for the state.

Data regarding deaths due to disease furnished by the Minnesota Department of Health did not indicate patterns different from the state as a whole.

Table 16 shows that the marriage dissolution rate in 1978 for Cass county was considerably above that for Crow Wing county. The latter closely approximated the state rate.

Table 16. Marriage dissolution rates, Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1978.

	Cass County	Crow Wing County	Minnesota
Marriages	113	350	33,480
Divorces and Annulments	74	150	14,393
Dissolution Rate (Divorces and Annullments/ Marriages)	.65	.43	.43

Source: Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Health Statistics, 1978.

Community Services

Information regarding community services was obtained from "Community Profiles" produced by the Minnesota Department of Economic Development. Such information was available for Pine River and Pequot Lakes but was not developed for communities the size of Backus.

Pequot Lakes had no hospital or nursing home beds. It had one doctor and two dentists. The nearest hospital was in Brainerd, 20 miles away. The community had four Protestant churches and one Catholic church. One municipal park and three golf courses were available to residents. The community was served by one weekly newspaper, one FM radio station, and three national television networks. A public library was not available in Pequot Lakes. One bank and several service organizations served Pequot Lakes including a Chamber of Commerce, an American Legion, a VFW, and a Toastmaster's Women's Club.

Pequot Lakes had a mayor/council form of city government. Two regular police officers, one part-time officer, and 25 volunteer firemen also served the community. Primary sources of city revenue were taxes and the local liquor store. These sources supported a $500,000 annual budget in 1979.

Like Pequot Lakes, Pine River had no hospital beds; it was also served by the Brainerd hospital 30 miles away. Ninety-three nursing home beds were available in Pine River which were served by three doctors and two dentists. The town had four Protestant churches and one Catholic church. Two municipal parks were located in the community. One weekly newspaper and the three television networks served the community. Two financial institutions served the community, Pine River State Bank and the First Federal Savings and Loan. A

regional bookmobile served the community. Service organizations included Boosters, Lions, Masons, and American Legion.

Freight transportation by train or truck was available on a daily basis in Pequot Lakes. In addition, the town was served by Greyhound bus, United Parcel Service, and a local airport. State highway 371 was the primary road connecting Pequot Lakes with surrounding communities.

Burlington Northern railroad and two truck lines served Pine River. Passenger transportation was available on Greyhound bus lines. Passenger service by train to Staples, 57 miles away, was also available. Pine River was also served by a local airport and United Parcel Service. State highways 371 and 84 were primary road arteries connecting Pine River with surrounding communities.

Pine River, like Pequot Lakes, had a mayor/council form of government. Two regular policemen and 25 volunteer firemen served the community which had an annual budget of $455,078.

Agricultural Characteristics

Information regarding farms and farming is presented in Tables 17-20. The forest soils, the suitability of this lake area for recreational purposes, and the large expanses of public lands influenced the nature of farms and farming in the area. Table 17 shows that mid-sized farms predominated in Cass and Crow Wing counties. The number of farms increased slightly in Cass county (from 649 to 689 or 6 percent) between 1969 and 1974, while in Crow Wing county the number of farms decreased slightly (from 630 to 604 or 4 percent) in the same period. Most increases in number of farms occurred in the smaller acreage categories, reflecting the increased incidence of hobby type farming which occurred in these counties during the 1970's. Total farm acreage in Cass county was 194,945 in 1974, which represented an increase of 12,061 acres since 1969. Total farm acreage in Crow Wing county remained 636,544 over the same time period.

Table 18 indicates the amount of cash income farmers in Cass and Crow Wing counties received from livestock and crop farm enterprises and farm government payments between the years 1975 and 1978. Of these income sources, livestock ranked first in amount of income produced, crops ranked second and government payments ranked third.

Table 19 shows production of oats, corn, soybeans, and hay in Cass and Crow Wing counties during the years 1976 and 1979. More acreage of hay was harvested in both counties than any other crop reported. The number of acres of oats harvested increased over the three-year period. Corn acreage and production increased in Cass county and declined slightly in Crow Wing county over the three years. In general, oats and corn acreages harvested were about equal. The acres of soybeans grown was very small in relation to oats and corn.

Table 20 reveals the number of different types of livestock on farms in Cass and Crow Wing counties. Of the four types of livestock listed in Table 20, cattle and calves were the most predominant in the counties. Sheep and lambs were least represented in both counties among the four livestock enterprises. Hogs, which were second in number to cattle and calves in all three years in Cass county, increased over the three year period. Hogs increased in Crow Wing county in the same time period. The number of dairy cows remained almost constant over the three year time period. The number of sheep and lambs declined in Cass county and remained stable in Crow Wing county in the same time period.

Table 17. Number of various size farms in Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1969, 1974.

Acreage Categories	Number of Farms			
	Cass		Crow Wing	
	1969	1974	1969	1974
1-99 Acres	77	108	120	160
100-179 Acres	146	165	176	146
180-259 Acres	155	122	157	121
260-499 Acres	209	229	137	132
500-999 Acres	48	48	42	34
1000-1999 Acres	2	3	4	2
County Average	280	283	255	236
Total	649	689	630	604

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Minnesota State and County Data--1974 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 23. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977.

Table 18. Cash income in thousands of dollars received by farmers in Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1975, 1977, 1978.

Income Source	Cass County			Crow Wing County		
	1975	1977	1978	1975	1977	1978
Livestock	6247	7142	7650	5621	6290	7001
Crops	1242	1484	1781	1007	1196	1919
Government Payments	123	796	385	113	426	154
Total	7712	9422	9816	6741	7912	9074

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Minnesota Agricultural Statistics, 1978, 1979, 1980.

Table 19. Oats, corn, and soybean production in bushels, and hay production in tons, Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1976 and 1979.

Years and County	Crops			
	Hay	Oats	Corn	Soybeans
Cass County				
1976				
Acreage Harvested	57400	4000	3500	200
Yield Per Harvested Acre	.7	34.8	28.0	13.0
1979				
Acreage Harvested	54000	4600	5000	200
Yield Per Harvested Acre	1.8	46.0	59.0	26.0
Crow Wing County				
1976				
Acreage Harvested	32800	6200	7700	300
Yield Per Harvested Acre	.7	33.5	28.5	8.3
1979				
Acreage Harvested	32000	7100	7500	1200
Yield Per Harvested Acre	2.3	44.0	62.0	21.0

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Crop & Livestock Reporting Service, Minnesota Agricultural Statistics, 1976, 1979.

Table 20. Number of Livestock by type, Cass and Crow Wing counties, 1977, 1978, 1979.

Livestock Type	Cass County			Crow Wing County		
	1977	1978	1979	1977	1978	1979
Cattle and Calves	27,700	23,600	21,900	15,300	15,100	15,000
Hogs (including pig crop)	4,600	5,000	7,500	3,700	3,900	5,500
Milk Cows	3,400	3,100	3,400	4,600	4,700	4,700
Sheep and Lambs	2,500	2,200	1,900	1,400	1,300	1,500

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, Minnesota Agricultural Statistics, 1978, 1979, 1980.

Summary

The physical and community setting in which the Heartland Vocational Center was located was characterized by diversity. Natural surroundings provided the setting for a resort industry. Yet, land clearings and irrigation systems provided opportunities for agricultural production and its support of businesses to grow and develop as a livelihood for some residents and as a hobby for others. Growing in population, these counties and communities experienced in-migration during the 1970's and were categorized as predominantly rural nonfarm.

Educational levels were lower than those for the state as a whole, with the median years of education falling below high school completion. Average income was below the average for the state as a whole with a higher proportion of incomes falling below the poverty level than for the state. The unemployment rate was higher than that for the state and exhibited seasonal fluctuations. Compared to the state as a whole, a higher proportion of people in Cass and Crow Wing counties were employed in government and a lower proportion were employed in manufacturing and white collar occupations.

Female and male occupational patterns exhibited traditional characteristics with an apparent tendency for females to be unemployed and, when employed, to work in traditional female occupations.

A greater proportion of high risk births in terms of mother's age, amount of prenatal care, mother's health status, and other identified risk dimensions was evident in these counties in 1978 than in Minnesota as a whole. Mother's educational levels were below the state average. A higher fertility rate, and a higher out-of-wedlock birth rate than the state as a whole further characterized the two counties. More births per 1000 women than the state as a whole was also reflected. A higher rate of congenital defects and birth injuries was also apparent when compared to the state as a whole. In Cass county the marriage dissolution rate exceeded that for Minnesota by 22 percent.

The three communities depended on nearby Brainerd for hospital facilities. The closest post-secondary education was available 20-70 miles away at Brainerd and Bemidji and included technical training programs, four year degree programs and graduate programs. Major transportation systems were available in, or near, the communities.

Livestock enterprises dominated agricultural production, with beef, hogs, and dairy being the most predominant. This picture is reflected in the fact that feed crops (hay, oats, and corn) were grown to a greater extent than were cash crops (soy beans). Average farm size was fairly stable with a small but apparent increase in total farm acres. Most of the farms were between 100 and 500 acres in size. An increase in the number of farms less than 99 acres and a decrease in the number of farms 180-259 acres in size occurred in both counties.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Introduction

The purpose of the preceding chapter was to provide a general overview of the geographical, economic, and social setting of the Heartland Vocational Center. The focus of this chapter is on the school districts involved in the center. The purpose of examining school district data is two-fold. First, such data provide a picture of each individual school district and add to an understanding of the context for this decentralized secondary center. Second, the data provide a picture of similarities and differences between cooperating school districts and reveal clues concerning the dynamics of inter-school district cooperation.

School districts are described in terms of size, educational facilities, financial resources and expenditures, governance structures, management, instructional staff, curricula, scheduling practices, and student characteristics. Information regarding the Pine River school district is more complete than that for Pequot Lakes and Backus. Pequot Lakes had withdrawn from the center in October of 1978, the year for which the data were collected. Their cooperation could not be obtained to participate in the interview and reporting procedures of the study. Some information regarding the Backus district was unavailable or was not provided.

Data for Minnesota as a whole are presented in some cases adjacent to that of the three school districts to provide a sense of the state context in which the three districts were set.

Profile data for the three school districts, available from the Minnesota Department of Education for the years 1972 through 1980, were incorporated into the report to provide a picture of trends over time for each of the school districts.

Size

The three school districts varied in geographical size and in enrollment. Table 21 compares the three school districts on the basis of the number of square miles included in each district. The Pine River school district was the largest in area, covering 344 square miles. The Pequot Lakes district was less than half as large with 152 square miles. The Backus district, somewhat larger than the Pequot Lakes district, was about half the size of the Pine River district with 191 square miles.

Table 21. Number of square miles in the Backus, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes school districts.

School District	Square Miles
Pequot lakes	152
Backus	191
Pine River	344

Source: School district superintendents.

The Pine River school operated eighteen school buses; Backus operated five buses. Pequot Lakes did not provide information regarding the number of buses used to transport students to and from school. Size in terms of number of households in the school district with school age children was obtained at the time of the interview. The figures reported were 600 for Pine River and 155 for Backus.

Size of the school district in terms of student enrollment is presented in Table 22 for the years 1973-74 through 1979-80. It should be noted that Table 22 also reflects a change in the year 1978-79 in the reporting procedures for enrollment. Prior to 1978-79, October 1, enrollment counts are presented (e.g. the 1977-78 enrollment figures represented the enrollment count on October 1, 1977). Beginning in 1978-79, resident average daily membership (ADM) figures were used. ADM is the average number of pupils (unweighted) in membership during the school year. Pupils do not need to be in attendance to be counted in ADM but they must be currently enrolled in the district, i.e., in membership.

Although Pine River consistently had the largest student enrollment of the three districts, Pequot Lakes and Pine River were similar in size with Pequot Lakes' enrollment ranging from 85-96 percent of that of Pine River. Backus enrollment was considerably smaller than the other two schools; its enrollment was only 30 percent of Pine River's enrollment.

These school enrollments present a considerably different picture than do school enrollments for the state as a whole since 1973. Comparing 1973-74 enrollments with 1979-80 enrollments (a slight error is inherent in this calculation due to the change from using October 1 enrollments in 1973-74 to ADM in 1978-79), Backus enrollments declined 2.3 percent, Pine River declined 0.71 percent, and Pequot Lakes increased 7.9 percent. These percentages compare with an 11 percent decline in school enrollments for the state as a whole for the same years.

Table 22. Number of students enrolled in Backus, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes school districts on an average daily membership (ADM) or October 1 Basis, 1973-1980.

School Grade Levels	1973-74 Oct. 1 Enroll.	1975-76 Oct. 1 Enroll.	1977-78 Oct. 1 Enroll.	1979-80 (ADM)
Backus				
Kindergarten	14	17	21	20
Grades 1-6	123	122	137	123
Grades 7-12	169	165	157	156
Total	306	304	315	299
Pine River				
Kindergarten	73	67	67	46
Grades 1-6	442	406	438	428
Grades 7-12	467	473	501	501
Total	982	966	1006	975
Pequot Lakes				
Kindergarten	50	57	49	50
Grades 1-6	377	352	383	417
Grades 7-12	413	466	485	440
Total	840	875	917	907

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1974-80.

Examining the kindergarten and elementary grade level enrollment is a way of estimating future secondary enrollments in these schools. Backus elementary enrollments in 1979-80 were almost identical to those reported in 1973-74 with little variation in intervening years. Kindergarten enrollment increased slightly during the seven-year period from 1973-74 to 1979-80. Pine River experienced a decline in elementary and kindergarten enrollments over the same period. Pequot Lakes presented a picture of stable kindergarten and increased elementary enrollments.

Secondary enrollment declined slightly in Backus but increased in the other two schools over the same time period. The net change over the several years reflects enrollment stability in Backus and Pine River and an increase in total school enrollment in Pequot Lakes.

To ascertain the degree of geographical concentration of the student population, a pupil density ratio was calculated for each school district. A ratio of number of pupils to number of square miles in the district yields a pupils/square miles figure which is an index that can be compared to obtain a sense of the pupil transportation requirements a school district must meet. The index must be interpreted in light of the proportion of students transported in the district and the location of the school. This index is presented in Table 23 for the three districts. Pequot Lakes had the largest number of students per square mile; Backus had the lowest number of students per square mile.

Table 23. Pupil density index: Number of pupils (ADM) per square mile, 1979-80.

	1979-80 ADM[1]	Number of Square Miles in School District	Pupil Density Index (ADM/No. Sq. Mil)
Backus	299	191	1.57
Pine River	975	344	2.83
Pequot Lakes	907	152	5.95

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1980.

Facilities

The school facilities in Pine River were approximately twenty years old with no building additions. Planned additions included five classrooms plus an addition to the media center. The Backus school was built in 1937 with an elementary wing and gym added in 1967. No future additions were planned at the time of the interviews. The Pequot Lakes school facilities had undergone recent construction but, since detailed interviews and observations were not possible in this community, no information was obtained.

Finances

Tax rates and property values are presented as a way of assessing the economic resources available to the school district.

Table 24 portrays the proportion of school district revenues coming from local, state, and federal sources. Local sources of revenue represent revenues from taxes, tuition and fees, sales of assets, payments from other school districts, and all other local sources. Percent state indicates the percentage of receipts that originated from state sources, primarily from state aids. Percent federal reflects the identifiable federal sources that

reach local schools. Though all the federal monies flow through the state, certain proportions of aids are identifiable as coming from federal sources.

Comparing the three school districts, Table 24 reveals that Pequot Lakes was supported to a larger extent by local sources of revenue than either of the other two districts. Pine River and Backus were supported by state and federal sources of revenue to a larger extent. Minnesota's equalization law (known as the Minnesota Miracle), which provides more state aid to districts having fewer local resources available, is reflected in these proportions. The percentages for Minnesota as a whole, reflected in Table 24, indicate that Pine River had a consistently lower proportion of revenues coming from local sources and a consistently higher proportion coming from state sources than the state as a whole. Pequot Lakes, on the other hand, was consistent in having a higher proportion of revenues coming from local sources and a lower proportion from state sources than the state average. Backus fluctuated in its relationship to the state average and had proportions very close to the state average in several years. Examining trends across time within school districts it can be seen that the local share increased and the state share decreased in Pine River and Pequot Lakes districts during the years indicated.

Table 24. Percent of student district revenues coming from federal, state, and local sources, Backus, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes school districts, 1973-1980.

Revenue Source	1973-74	1975-76	1977-78	1979-80
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Backus				
Federal	9	4	7	7
State	56	56	51	54
Local	35	40	42	39
Pine River				
Federal	6	8	6	8
State	68	67	66	61
Local	26	25	28	31
Pequot Lakes				
Federal	5	5	4	4
State	45	41	35	36
Local	50	54	61	60
Minnesota Average				
Federal	5	6	6	6
State	53	56	52	52
Local	42	38	42	42

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1974-80.

Federal dollars were a consistently minor source of revenues in all three districts and hovered near the state average for all three throughout the time period reported.

Table 25 shows tax rates and property values for the three school districts. Auditor mills and EARC mills are measures of the burden of property taxes for school purposes for taxes payable in the year indicated in the table.

Table 25. Tax rates and property values: Backus, Pine River, Pequot Lakes, and Minnesota average, 1973-79.

	1973	1975	1977	1979
Backus				
Auditor Mills	52.64	69.47	63.62	55.88
EARC Mills	30.38	37.66	32.83	31.91
EARC Valuation Per Pupil Unit	12,391	16,297	25,667	32,101
Pine River				
Auditor Mills	44.30	60.89	66.71	61.73
EARC Mills	28.75	35.27	36.82	35.62
EARC Valuation Per Pupil Unit	7,762	11,182	15,027	18,097
Pequot Lakes				
Auditor Mills	23.12	35.88	51.72	50.00
EARC Mills	14.77	22.55	33.46	31.40
EARC Valuation Per Pupil Unit	24,664	32,657	38,666	46,289
Minnesota Average				
Auditor Mills	52.49	53.99	53.53	48.04
EARC Mills	42.97	40.35	36.39	32.19
EARC Mills Per Pupil Unit	12,344	16,715	21,922	25,861

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1973-79.

EARC mills refers to the mill rate of school taxes based on the districts' adjusted assessed values, as computed by the Equal Aid Review Committee (EARC). When comparing the tax rates among school districts, it is more valid to use EARC mills than auditor mills because the former is adjusted to partially compensate for differences in local assessment practices. The data in Table 25 can be interpreted in a more meaningful way when the state trends in taxes and property valuation are known. In general, property values increased sharply in Minnesota between 1973 and 1979. In an attempt to constrain property taxes for school districts which would rise directly as a function of increased valuation, the state legislature took action to lower school district tax rates. The net effect of upward moving property values and downward moving tax rates was an increase in actual tax bills of individual property owners because decreases in tax rates did not keep pace with increases in valuation. These trends are apparent in Table 25 where Minnesota average trends since 1973 show steadily increasing property values (EARC valuation) and steadily decreasing tax rates (EARC mills).

Looking first at property values across the three school districts, it can be seen in Table 25 that the EARC valuation for Backus and Pequot Lakes was consistently above that for Pine River. In all three communities, and for the state as a whole, property values per pupil unit rose steadily during the years reported.

If the EARC values per pupil unit for each school district are compared with those for the state, it can be seen that Pequot Lakes' valuations were consistently above the state average, Pine River's valuations were consistently below the state average, and Backus' valuations paralleled the state average from 1973-75 but surpassed the state figures in the years after 1975.

Continuing to look across school districts, the three districts became more similar in the 1979 EARC mill rate than they were in 1973, primarily due to the increase in these rates for Pequot Lakes.

Table 26. Per pupil measures of school district financial characteristics: total expenditures, state and local operating costs, bonded debt, unappropriated operating funds balance, and change in fund balance 1973-80.

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80
Backus							
Total Expenditures	1274	1552	1709	1478	1570	1634	1901
State and Local Operating Costs	820	1059	1196	1151	1268	1347	1540
Bonded Debt	1246	1202	1063	987	978	886	826
Unappropriated Operating Funds Balance	NA	NA	NA	128	74	46	39-
Change in Fund Balance	NA	NA	NA	40	10-	28-	7
Pine River							
Total Expenditures	1437	1604	1324	1216	1315	1733	1733
State and Local Operating Costs	645	741	853	962	1034	1087	1336
Bonded Debt	1513	1422	1457	1380	1321	1273	1758
Unappropriated Operating Funds Balance	NA	NA	NA	98	285	552	710
Change in Fund Balance	NA	NA	NA	152	121	282	148
Pequot Lakes							
Total Expenditues	1024	1063	1144	1383	1242	1359	1687
State and Local Operating Costs	705	746	830	1163	1026	1110	1417
Bonded Debt	1068	964	930	1180	3594	3469	3474
Unappropriated Operating Funds Balance	NA	NA	NA	126-	119	241	298
Change in Fund Balance	NA	NA	NA	7	190	124	28
Minnesota Average							
Total Expenditures	1248	1442	1568	1384	1505	1654	1872
State and Local Operating Costs	859	960	1059	1160	1243	1363	1525
Bonded Debt	1043	1546	1067	1071	1035	1050	1065
Unappropriated Operating Funds Balance	NA	NA	NA	50	94	257	316
Change in Fund Balance	NA	NA	NA	3	47	50	54

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1974-80.

Financial condition is determined only in part by resources. Expenditures must also be examined to gain an adequate understanding of a school's financial picture. Table 26 exhibits data which reflect expenditures for the three school districts.

Table 26 reveals multiple measures of school district expenditures and financial character. These measures include total expenditures, state and local operating costs, bonded debt, and unappropriated operating fund balance. Total expenditures per pupil unit is a summation of expenditures for tuition (i.e. transfers), student activities, food service, fixed charges (including abatements), plant maintenance, plant operation, transportation, attendance and health instruction, and administration for a school year divided by total pupil units.

State and local operating costs are sometimes referred to as the "per pupil maintenance costs." This figure represents the cost per pupil of educating the district's children. It excludes federal financing, transportation, community services, revenue form the sale of lunches, materials and student activities. Starting in 1976-77 capital outlay and debt service were also excluded. Bonded debt is a measure of a school district's debt. Unappropriated operating fund balance is a measure of a district's financial condition and of resources available for future years.

Because changes have occurred from one year to the next in the way some of the financial measures have been calculated by the state, comparisons across time for selected measures are difficult. Consequently, a comparison is limited to that between school districts within a time period for these measures.

Comparing the three school districts on total expenditures per pupil, it may be noted that in more recent years, Backus showed a higher figure than the other two districts. The small student body in Backus undoubtedly contributed to this relationship because it provided Backus with a much smaller denominator in all per pupil measures.

While Backus tended to be slightly above the state average in total expenditures, Pine River and Pequot Lakes tended to be slightly below the state average.

Comparing the districts on state and local operating costs, it can be seen that Backus tended to have a higher per pupil figure than either Pine River or Pequot Lakes. Relationships of the three school districts to the state average on this measure are similar to those for total expenditures.

The three school districts present different patterns with respect to bonded debt, a measure that does permit comparison across time. This figure for Backus declined steadily after 1973-74. Backus had completed no new construction during these years. Pine River's pattern shows declining bonded debt after 1973-74, a year when construction on school buildings occurred, until 1979-80 when an increase reflected the vocational center building. Bonded debt for Pequot Lakes shows a sharp increase in 1977-78 reflecting construction of new school facilities. Bonded debt for the state as a whole was characterized by stability during the seven year time period.

The general financial condition of the school districts, reflected in the unappropriated operating funds balance, shows that Pine River was in the strongest position on this measure followed by Pequot Lakes and then Backus. Pine River consistently exceeded the state average on this figure while Pequot Lakes and Backus were below the state average in three of the four years for which these data were reported. These general patterns are further reflected in the change in fund balance which shows that revenues exceeded expenditures in the Pine River and Pequot Lakes districts during these years. In Backus, expenditures exceeded revenues in two of the four years.

Governance, Management, Policies, Procedures and Legal Structures

All districts were run as independent school districts with their own governance board and a superintendent acting as executive officer for the board. The elected school boards

had the power to authorize local tax levies for school purposes within limitations set by state law. Each of the three boards had seven members.

Backus board members at the time of the interview included a day activity center director and an aid, a woodsmith, a nurse, two homemakers, and a railroad foreman. Three males and four females comprised the board. In Pine River, six board members were male and one was female. Occupations of the Pine River board members were game warden, manager, homemaker, real estate sales person, contractor, and farmer.

Staff

The size of the teaching and administrative staff in Pequot Lakes, Pine River, and Backus is shown in Table 27. Total staff FTE is defined as the total number of professional staff employed by the district measured in full-time equivalents. This count includes administrators, classroom teachers, and all other licensed personnel. Pupil total/FTE is the total number of pupils served in grades K-12 per full-time equivalent staff member. Staff size was very stable in Backus during the years reported but grew considerably in Pequot Lakes and to some extent in Pine River. Backus staff was smallest in size followed by Pequot Lakes and Pine River. The ratio of pupil total to full-time equivalent staff indicates that the student/staff ratio for all three districts declined from 1974 to 1980.

At the time of the interviews, Backus had three administrators, 1.5 for the elementary school and 1.5 for the secondary school. Pine River had two administrators for the elementary and high school. Pequot Lakes had three administrators, one for the elementary school and two for grades seven through twelve.

Table 27. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) professional elementary and secondary staff, Backus, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes, 1973-1980.

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80
Backus							
Total Staff FTE	21	20	22	22	22	21	22
Pupil Total/FTE	14.6	15.0	14.0	13.6	14.3	14.7	14.0
Pine River							
Total Staff FTE	58	57	59	59	62	62	66
Pupil Total/FTE	17.0	18.0	16.6	17.2	16.2	16.1	14.6
Pequot Lakes							
Total Staff FTE	43	44	44	42	51	54	60
Pupil Total/FTE	19.4	19.8	20.2	21.1	18.0	17.3	15.3

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1974-80.

The majority of the teaching staff in both Pine River and Backus was described as middle aged (26-56). Pine River teachers were reported as having, on the average, eleven to fifteen years experience, while Backus teachers were, on the average, reported to have six to ten years of experience. Less than ten percent of the Backus teachers were reported to hold master's degrees; ten to twenty percent of the Pine River teachers were reported to hold master's degrees.

Teacher loads are presented in Table 28. Teacher/student contact is defined as the total length of time the teacher is scheduled each day in a teacher-student classroom setting including classes, study halls, homerooms, activity periods, recess periods, and passing time. Length of a class period is the length of time for a classroom period, including passing time, for a 12th grader. Teacher load is defined as the number of periods per day for a twelfth grade teacher carrying a normal class load including study halls.

Comparing the school districts, some differences are apparent. Backus had a seven-period day and a six-class teaching load for teachers. Pine River had a six-period day and a five-class teaching load for teachers. Even though the Backus school day included one more period than the Pine River school day, total teacher/student contact time for Pine River and Backus only differed by fifteen minutes because Backus class periods were shorter than Pine River's. Pequot Lakes had a longer preparation time and time requirement before and after class than did either Pine River or Backus. Pequot Lakes' school day was also the longest. These data indicate that the daily schedules of these schools were not synchronized as a result of their cooperating together in the vocational center.

Scheduling and Curriculum

In Pine River, a total of 156 courses were offered to students in grades nine through twelve. Ninth and tenth graders had three electives, eleventh graders had four and twelfth graders had six. Students had no or one free period per day.

Table 28. Classroom, teacher workday and class load for a high school teacher, 1978-79.

Teacher Load Factors	Backus	Pine River	Pequot Lakes
Total Day at School (minutes)	443	440	465
Number of Periods per Day	7	6	-
Before & After Class Time (minutes)	50	45	65
Teacher/Student Contact (minutes)	315	305	305
Preparation and/or Free (minutes)	53	60	70
Noon Lunch (minutes)	25	30	25
Length of Class Period (minutes)	53	60	-
Teacher Class Load	6	5	-

Source: Minnesota School Boards Association, Licensed Salaries and Related Information Report, 1977-79.

Ninth and tenth graders in Pine River met individually with the counselor for high school and general planning. Actual schedule planning for high school students was done through a faculty advisor. Scheduling occurred twice per year for students, although students planned one year at a time and initially planned grades 10, 11, and 12 when they entered grade 10. Post-high-school planning was done by students in every grade, nine through twelve. In grade nine, career planning was addressed in a career education class, group work, and individual interviews with the counselor. In grade ten, students had individual interviews with the counselor regarding high school course suggestions and general planning. Eleventh graders had one individual interview with the counselor involving post-secondary planning, on-the-job training, and senior planning. Seniors had at least three individual interviews; many students reportedly had more than three such interviews. Senior interviews involved planning, applications, financial aids, and job placement and referrals to a limited extent. In addition to these activities, students participated in a college night at Brainerd and visited colleges and other post-secondary schools.

Students

Students are described in this section in relation to rates of handicaps, minorities, attendance, and transportation to and from school. Minority is defined as the percentage of the district's total enrollment which is considered to be of Native American, Black, Oriental or Spanish-speaking origin. Attendance is presented as the number of days attended by all pupils during the school year in relation to the total days these pupils could have attended. Transported, is defined as the number of students transported to and from school twenty or more days as a percentage of the district's total average membership. Table 29 contains this data.

Table 29. Selected student characteristics: percent handicapped, minority, in attendance, transported to and from school.

	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Backus						
Handicapped	4.3	4.3	9.9	NA	NA	NA
Minority	3.3	3.0	3.7	3.8	3.6	2.9
In Attendance	94.3	92.5	93.0	94.6	93.3	94.8
Transported	76.3	86.7	86.9	85.9	88.7	85.7
Pine River						
Handicapped	0.6	0.8	0.9	NA	NA	NA
Minority	2.6	2.6	2.7	3.4	2.7	3.0
In Attendance	94.1	94.8	94.9	94.5	91.2	93.8
Transported	88.2	98.0	99.8	100.1	100.0	98.8
Pequot Lakes						
Handicapped	1.6	1.0	0.8	NA	NA	NA
Minority	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.5
In Attendance	94.4	94.0	93.7	93.5	93.6	93.5
Transported	85.4	93.4	94.2	92.7	94.2	94.9

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, School District Profiles, 1975-80.

The reported proportion of handicapped students was higher for Backus than for Pine River and Pequot Lakes. Although the proportion of minority students (primarily of native American ancestry) was highest for Backus and lowest for Pequot Lakes, all of the schools reported very small percentages of minority students. Attendance rates were similar among the three districts and to the state average which ranged from 94-95 percent for the same time period. Backus reported transporting the lowest percentage of students. The Pine River transportation figure, the highest among the three schools, reflected the location of the school buildings beyond walking distance of the community. All three schools consistently transported a higher percentage of their students than the Minnesota average which ranged from 56 percent to 74 percent for the same time period.

During 1978-79, the student drop-out rate for grades nine through twelve in Backus was reported as 4.5 percent. Reasons given for students' dropping out of school included a dislike for school, incarceration, military enlistment, and discipline problems. In Pine River during the same year, 9 percent of the students in grades 9 through 12 dropped out of school. This rate was viewed as high by one school official who indicated that reasons for dropping out included poverty, lack of parental support, and a parental role model that did not reflect an emphasis on education and steady employment. He further attributed the drop-out rate to the community's view of a high school education as a "high" goal, stating that "the people, in general, are not book-motivated and don't set goals beyond high school."

According to data reported in the 1980 interviews, of the 1979 Pine River graduates (34 males and 26 females) 40 percent were attending a vocational technical school, 28 percent were farming or working in jobs other than agriculture, 13 percent were in the armed forces and 17 percent were attending a two- or four-year college one year later. Three females were married; one was a mother. Students were generally described by one school official as having the following characteristics:

a. Fifty percent did not go on to vocational schools or college
b. Most married soon after high school
c. Forty-six percent were on the reduced lunch program
d. They came from a poverty area and needed to be able to do things at home which would help them to exist on their small income.

In Pine River, 75 percent of the student body, 400 students, in grades 9 through 12 were reported to participate in extra-curricular activities. The average number of activities each student was reported to participate in was 1.5 . In Backus, 68 percent of the study body, 95 students, reportedly participated in extra-curricular activities. The average number of activities each student was reported to participate in was two.

In Pine River, a cooperative on-the-job training program enrolled 30 percent of the senior students.

Perceptions of School Personnel and Community Members

The discussion in this section is based on interviews with school officials, school advisory committee members, and parents. The purpose of interviewing was to gain a general understanding of how people in the community viewed the school and its programs, the relationships that were perceived to exist between the school and the community, and the extent to which there was mutual participation between community and school.

One Pine River school official expressed concern over a decline in standard test scores among the student population. He said that foreign languages had been reinstituted but at the same time said, "We need to do fewer things and do them well." Some community and school representatives implied that a strong competitive spirit existed between Pine River and Backus.

One general picture gained from several interviews was that education ranked low among other priorities in the minds of community members. Some individuals compared education to work, family and/or church, saying education ranked below all three as a priority. Another insight expressed in the interviews was that while community members expressed positive opinions about the school, they did not participate actively in school affairs and events. The community did not appear to see the school as a center for community activity. As one school official stated "they let the school board make the decisions." Low voter turnout in school elections was commented upon by several informants. One person interviewed suggested that the proportion of single parents of school children (21 percent) may have been a factor in the low participation rate in school affairs, since such parents often experience extreme constraints on their time. Interviews with parents revealed little participation in community organizations in general; church and agricultural extension programs seemed to be more predominant vehicles for community activity than did the school.

While education reportedly ranked low as a community priority, the need for education was strongly expressed by school officials. Some officials cited economic reasons, referring to the poverty level income of many families, and stressed the importance of families being able to use resources as efficiently as possible.

Others interviewed, described the need for education in terms of what they saw as "provincial perspectives" in the community. One informant from Pine River indicated that only 20 percent of the community population read the newspaper. More than one informant commented on the number of "subgroups and cliques" that existed in these communities. One person saw these groupings expressed in terms of churches, saying that "almost every church you can think of is represented." Another person revealed that one of the Backus churches was considering initiating a private high school.

A major factor in the growth of the population surrounding Pequot Lakes since 1970 was reported to be an influx of people from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area who had acquired lake property in the area. The in-migration brought professionals who worked in the metropolitan area but maintained a year-round residence in the Pequot Lakes area. This shift in population composition was cited as a factor in raising the financial status of Pequot Lakes school district from among the lowest rankings in the state where it was situated in the early 1970's.

Parents interviewed said they wanted their children to have further education beyond high school, a departure from the school officials' observations but perhaps a reflection of the views of the particular parents interviewed rather than of the general population. They felt that children's choice of occupation and location or residence should be left up to the children. Four of the five parents interviewed did not think that it was important for their children to establish residence in the community. Their reasons were lack of employment in the area and that the decision of where to live should be the children's.

Parents thought business and mathematics subjects in school were especially important for boys. For girls, the same subjects, with the addition of home economics, were identified.

Summary

The three rural school districts identified with the Heartland Vocational Center were similar in having a sizable rural nonfarm population. They varied however, in many of the other dimensions studied.

Size variations were evident in geography and enrollment and in geographic distribution of the enrollment. Pine River was the largest district in terms of the number of square miles and enrollment. Backus had a considerably smaller student enrollment than the other two schools. This enrollment factor was reflected in many of the per-pupil cost indices which were higher for Backus than for the other schools. Student population was more dense in Pequot Lakes than in the other two communities--a reflection of the lakeshore

residents in the area served by the Pequot Lakes school.

These schools had not experienced the severe enrollment declines that were typical of other Minnesota schools during the 1970's. Data presented earlier on county and community birth rates and in-migration suggest that a higher than average birth rate and a substantial influx of population contributed to the relatively stable school enrollment picture.

The schools appeared to differ in their financial conditions partly due to scale differences but seemingly due also to other factors. The local economic base varied considerably from Pequot Lakes, with the highest per pupil property valuation, to Pine River, with the lowest valuation. This was reflected in a greater dependence on state aids for both Pine River and Backus than for Pequot Lakes. The picture of expenditures for the three schools suggests that Backus had per-pupil costs in several cost categories that were higher than those for Pine River and Pequot Lakes. Differences in the general financial condition of the school districts were most apparent in the change of fund balance measure which indicated that for Backus, expenditures exceeded revenues in two of four years reported and that in the other two districts, revenues exceeded expenditures in all four years.

While the school districts differed on several dimensions, they were similar in other ways. They all expended more per pupil for transportation and administration than the state average but less for instructional salaries. The latter item reflects, in part at least, scale factors, general teacher salary levels, and fewer teachers with advanced degrees. Most students were transported to and from school in the three districts. Attendance rates were similar between the schools and to the state average.

School and education did not appear to rank at the top of community priorities and values, at least in Pine River and Backus where some sense of community attitudes toward education could be learned.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECENTRALIZED CENTER

History

The Heartland Vocational Center was initiated in 1972 as a cooperative effort among the Pine River, Pequot Lakes, and Backus school districts. Enrollment growth, curriculum changes, changes in facilities and center administration, and Pequot Lakes' withdrawal from the center marked the eight-year period between 1972 and 1980.

The Heartland Vocational Center is classified as decentralized, meaning that programs are located in multiple facilities. When the Center was initiated, three programs (auto mechanics, transportation, and model office) were located in the Pequot Lakes High School and three programs (foods occupations, model store, and construction) were located in the Pine River High School. Later, a health occupations program was initiated in Backus but was shut down after one year of operation.

It appears that Pequot Lakes was instrumental in the initiation of the center. It also appears that the identification of facilities was problematic. Initially, one program was located in the school bus garage at Pequot Lakes requiring the removal of the buses from the garage during scheduled class hours. Another program was located in a liquor store.

In 1974, a new superintendent came to Pine River. A strong supporter of vocational education and familiar with the vocational institutes in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, he arranged a tour of these vocational institute facilities for all board members from the three school districts. All board members participated in the plane trip and tour with the exception of one Pequot Lakes board member.

Tensions between communities surrounding the location of vocational center facilities are not uncommon. Frequently, they are a major reason for creating a decentralized center (i.e. having some programs housed in several communities) rather than a centralized center (i.e. all programs located in one community). Such tensions seem to have surrounded these communities as they attempted to solve their facilities problems.

In 1976 a possible solution to the facility problem was explored when a building which could house all or most of the vocational center programs became available in Pine River. The cost of this building was $100,000, part of which was sought from the state. However, due to a construction detail, the building was not approved for the state subsidy. Despite this, the center board discussed purchase of the building without subsidy.

When the vote to buy or not to buy the Pine River building was presented to the three school boards, the Pine River and Backus boards voted unanimously in favor of the purchase; the Pequot Lakes board defeated the purchase vote 4-3. The building was not purchased. After this occurred the original center director left in 1977, and a new director was hired.

By this time, ill feelings between the school districts were well established. Tensions between the communities were elevated further by a proposal advanced by Pine River and Backus. These two communities contended that, since they paid into the center at a higher rate than Pequot Lakes (school district contribution rates were based on foundation aids received by the districts and Pine River and Backus received more foundation aids than did Pequot Lakes, hence, their higher contribution rate to the center), their votes should be weighted more heavily than Pequot Lakes' vote. Pequot Lakes fought the proposal, taking the matter to the Minnesota attorney general where the proposal was defeated.

The situation seemed to grow beyond the capabilities of the director, who was fired in March, 1978. The director's position was vacant until September of 1978 when a director was hired on a part-time basis. The Heartland Vocational Center purchased 40 percent of the time of the director from a neighboring center. This was the administrative arrangement in effect at the time of the on-site interviews.

After the weighted-votes-proposal incident, Pequot Lakes took issue with the center budget, declaring that administrative costs for the center were too high relative to the total budget. They proposed that the center be dissolved and that the schools act as cooperating schools with no administrator. Backus and Pine River would not agree to this kind of arrangement, preferring to keep the center structure. Pequot Lakes then withdrew from the center in October 1978. Because the state requires a year's notice when a school district withdraws from a center, Pequot Lakes was issued a nonparticipation agreement. This meant that although Pequot Lakes remained legally part of the center until fall, 1979, they were allowed to discontinue sponsorship of programs and were not obligated to participate in reduction of the capital outlay deficit on a new building to be constructed during 1978-79. The building would house administrative offices, the construction program, and a new program, vocational agriculture. The model office program was moved from Pequot Lakes to Backus. The auto mechanics and transportation programs located in Pequot Lakes were replaced by a vocational agriculture program in the center curriculum. The auto mechanics and transportation programs continued to operate at Pequot Lakes as part of a comprehensive high school program for that school.

A brief analysis of this history suggests at least three key elements in the evolution of events surrounding the center. The first element was facilities. Location of facilities appeared to become an issue when a single central site was considered. It is not clear whether the multiple facility arrangement initiated in 1972 was viewed as a long term situation, as a stop gap measure until more permanent facilities could be obtained, or as a way of testing the districts' commitment to the whole center concept before investing heavily in facilities. When centralized facilities in Pine River became available, the facilities issue, which may have existed as an undercurrent since 1972, was thrust into the open and became a major factor in ensuing events.

A second key element appears to be the center financial mechanism. Several financing mechanisms are possible including a usage rate basis (i.e. school districts are assessed costs according to the number of students from each district enrolled in the center), a school enrollment basis (school districts bear center costs according to the number of students in each district in eligible grade levels), an ability to pay basis (districts with greater financial resources are assessed more than districts with fewer financial resources), and a flat fee basis (each participating school is assessed an equal share of the total costs).

The financial implications and enrollment incentives for school districts are somewhat different under each of these systems. Under a usage rate basis, the greater the number of students from a school district involved in a center, the more the school district pays. Under the school enrollment basis, school districts with the largest student populations pay the greatest share of the center costs regardless of the number of their students enrolled in center programs. An ability-to-pay basis assesses school districts with greater financial resources more heavily than school districts with fewer financial resources (usually on a percentage basis), regardless of the extent to which their students enroll in center programs. A flat fee basis charges all participating schools at the same rate regardless of their student population, financial status, or use of the center. While details regarding financing for the Heartland Vocational Center will be discussed in a later section, it should be noted that the center financing was based on three of the mechanisms just described--usage rate, ability to pay, and school enrollment.

A third key element may have been the administrative expertise available. It was reported that the second director, who came in the midst of the Pine River building decision, had relatively little administrative experience. It is not clear whether or not the chain of events would have continued as they did if strong center administrative leadership

had been available in the period following the defeat of the building purchase. It seems possible, however, to assume that the sensitivities aroused during the building purchase issue coupled with an apparent lack of strong leadership left the center particularly vulnerable to continuous controversy.

The chain of events may be viewed as a conflict sequence where Pequot Lakes defeated the building purchase, Pine River and Backus retaliated with the weighted-vote proposal, and Pequot Lakes retaliated by withdrawing from the center, using administration costs as a focus for their action. The issue which appears to have initiated this chain of actions was the possibility of capital investment in a single facility to be located in one of the communities.

Governance, Management, and Legal Structures

The by-laws of the Heartland Center, revised in 1979-80 to reflect the withdrawal of Pequot Lakes, stated that the purpose of the agreement between the Pine River and Backus school districts shall be to "cooperate in order to provide for comprehensive vocational education within the geographical boundaries of member districts, including a variety of career clusters for senior high students, career exploration for all junior high students, orientation to the work world for students in kindergarten through grade 12, and vocational upgrading and retraining for adults" (See Appendix, p. 2).

The management and control of the Heartland Vocational Center was vested in its governing board which was composed of two members from each of the three school boards (Pequot Lakes' school board had two representatives on the Heartland Center board during 1979-80, their nonparticipation status year). Governing board members were elected to terms of not less than one year. Each governing board member had one vote. The governing board set policy, approved a budget, and provided overall direction for the center.

Superintendents in the cooperating schools served as ex-officio members: they came to board meetings but did not have voting power. The vocational director, as an ex-officio member of the governing board, attended meetings but did not have voting power. Minnesota law requires that a superintendent from one of the cooperating schools serve as an administrative officer. This role involves signature of documents and involves various aspects of supervision of the vocational director. In the Heartland Center, this role was rotated among participating school superintendents.

An executive committee composed of the chairperson of the governing board, the vocational director, and the supervising superintendent served as an advisory body to the center director in the interim between board meetings.

A steering committee was appointed by the governing board to advise the board and center staff on planning for meeting student needs and employment needs. An advisory committee for each career cluster offered through the center was appointed by the governing board to advise center staff regarding programs offered by the center.

The vocational director, as the executive officer of the governing board, made recommendations to the board and carried out decisions made, and policies set, by the board. The vocational director's duties included center staff recruitment and supervision, facility supervision, maintaining relationships with other pertinent units, and program development and supervision. In addition to these duties, the Heartland Center director served as the vocational director for the Backus and Pine River home economics programs. This role involved preparing the annual agreement with the state and monitoring licensure for teachers.

Facilities

As indicated in the history section, multiple facilities had been used by the Heartland Center since its inception. At the time of the interviews, the Pine River high

school housed the foods occupations and model store programs. Construction and agriculture programs and the administrative offices were located in a new building constructed in 1979-80 with partial Upper Great Lakes funding. A $6,000 deficit in capital outlay for the building remained to be paid by participating schools at the time of the interviews. Pequot Lakes was relieved of their obligation relative to the deficit when they withdrew.

It appeared that this new building, which contained 4,000 square feet, was smaller than the building in Pine River which had been considered in 1976. This building contained three offices, a classroom, and shop facilities. The new building had been built by construction program students and was located one block east of the Pine River high school. Future projected plans for the building included development of an adjacent landscape area and greenhouse. Two-thousand square feet of space in participating school districts was rented by the center. Backus school facilities were used for the model office program and for one section of the vocational agriculture program. The foods occupations program was housed in the Pine River high school. The Brainerd Area Vocational Technical Institute used the new center facility in Pine River for adult farm management classes offered to farmers in the area.

Financing and Costs

As indicated in the history section, financing for the Center was based on three financing mechanisms: student enrollments in participating schools, user rate, and ability to pay.

Student enrollments in grades 7-12 for each participating district were obtained from the most recent Minnesota Educational Directory or from the registration enrollment as of October 1, of the current school year. These enrollments were totaled and the percent contributed to the total by each district was calculated. This percent was applied to the "remaining costs" (costs for center programs after vocational aids had been deducted) to determine each participating school district's assessment for the vocational center (See Appendix, Attachment A).

User rate and ability-to-pay mechanisms focused on the foundation aids received by school districts from the state. Foundation aids funds were obtained by the center from participating districts based on a user rate defined as the number of hours a student spent in center classes in relation to the students' total hours in school. This ratio (usually 2/6) plus a one-half hour preparation period for instruction was multiplied by the amount of foundation aid received by the district to arrive at a per-student assessment (See Appendix, Attachment A). Since Backus and Pine River had fewer local resources available than did Pequot Lakes, they received more foundation aid per student than did Pequot Lakes. This was a reflection of the "Minnesota school finance miracle" whereby school districts with fewer local financial resources were supported at a higher rate by the state than were school districts with a greater amount of local financial resources.

The foundation aid formula embodied both a user rate (because it was based on the number of students enrolled in the center and the time they were at the center) and an ability-to-pay mechanism. The ability to pay was determined solely by foundation aids received by a district and, consequently had an ironic twist. Districts receiving more foundation aids paid into the center at a higher per-student rate than did districts receiving less foundation aid. Hence, the school districts that had fewer local resources and received more compensatory foundation aids paid into the center at a higher rate.

In the early 1970's the Pequot Lakes district would have been among the more needy districts in the state and would have received greater amounts of foundation aid per student than was the case at the time of the interviews due to their improved financial condition over the decade. Consequently, Pequot Lakes would have been in the position of contributing foundation aids at a decreasing rate over the time of their participation in the center. Pine River, on the other hand, receiving state aid at the highest rate among

the three districts (see Table 24), paid into the center at the highest rate among the three districts.

Concern was expressed in the course of the interviews that the financial formulas were detrimental to the center and to relationships between schools in the Heartland situation. Under the current formulas, it was feared that schools were discouraged from sending students to the center because the more students a school sent the greater the school's cost assessment from the center would be. Further, the practice of removing foundation aids from school districts was seen as potentially generating negative attitudes toward the center. Changing the total remaining cost formula, in which the participating schools' foundation aid contribution to the center would be eliminated in favor of a school assessment based on an equal amount of the total costs, was being considered at the time of the interviews.

Costs for the Heartland Center on a per-pupil basis were $945.41 in 1979 (per-pupil maintenance cost). The cost per student for the center, less vocational aids, cannot exceed home school district maintenance cost per pupil. Per-pupil maintenance costs for the same period for Backus, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes were $1540, $1336, and $1417, respectively. One informant indicated that if this relationship of center costs to school district costs was applied to center and school district programs, it could be helpful in determining if a center program should be continued or deleted.

The total Center budget was approximately $90,000. Approximately one-third of this total was devoted to administration functions and two-thirds to instruction.

In summary, several alternatives exist for deriving financing formulas for vocational centers. Local perceptions indicated that the particular formulas used in this center, along with the facilities problems already discussed, were important factors in the tensions among the participating schools in this center.

Size

Size of the center in terms of enrollments is shown in Table 30.

Table 30. Number of students enrolled in Heartland Center.

Enrollment	1978-79	1979-80
Actual Enrollment	103	100
Possible Enrollment (Number of juniors and seniors enrolled in participating schools)	215	200
Percentage of possible enrollment actually enrolled	48%	50%

Source: Vocational director.

Enrollment is similar between the two years shown. Prior total enrollment included Pequot Lakes students; consequently, the total Center enrollment declined in 1978-79 when Pequot Lakes withdrew. Assuming that Pequot Lakes would have enrolled approximately 15 percent of its 7-12 ADM (see Table 22 and Table 31), 66 students were lost to the 1979-80 center enrollment by the withdrawal of Pequot Lakes. This represents a reduction of one-third of the center's enrollment.

Enrollment from each participating school is shown in Table 31. The number of males enrolled in the center was almost three times that of females. Pine River enrolled two and one half times as many students as did Backus.

Table 31. Number of students enrolled in the Heartland Center by participating schools, 1979-80.

School	Male	Female	Total	% of 7-12 School District ADM
Backus	18	10	28	18
Pine River	56	16	72	14
Total	74	26	100	

Source: Vocational director and teachers.

Program enrollments are shown in Table 32. Comparison of program enrollments with total enrollments indicate that some students were registered in more than one program. Average class size was seventeen. Average student/teacher ratio was 15.

Table 32. Number of students enrolled in the Heartland Center by program, 1979-80.

Program	Enrollment
Model Office	10
Construction	10
Foods Occupations	10
Model Store	16
Ag Exploration*	28
Ag Mechanics	27
Ag Production	18

Source: Vocational director.
* Ag Exploration enrolled students in grades 9-10. All other programs enrolled students in grades 11-12.

It was reported that enrollment tended to start out high in the fall and decline toward spring. One factor reported to affect this pattern was the opportunity available to students to enter a center program for a quarter or two and then leave. This policy was based on the view that if center programs were intended to be exploratory, students should have the opportunity to explore a range of programs and to leave a program when they have discovered it didn't suit them. It was reported that this view represented a change from

previous perspectives that held that students should make a year long commitment to a center program.

The foods occupations program was reported to have a history of low enrollment. One official commented on problems associated with small schools in general, which he saw reflected in center enrollment problems. He indicated, "Small places can't weather the enrollment fluctuations--the bigger ones can. We'll have twelve students sign up for a program one year and zero the next." He expressed the need for rural schools to increase and stabilize the population of students eligible for participating in programs. He saw the center concept as an attempt to do this but commented, "The loss of Pequot Lakes was critical in the enrollment population base." He did not view the combination of Pine River and Backus as large enough to support a cooperative program.

In summary, size appeared to be a potential threat to the Heartland Vocational Center. Informants tended to agree that present enrollment was at the minimum needed to justify the center. Some increase in center enrollments was possible since only 50 percent of the eligible students were presently enrolled.

Staff

Center staff consisted of one full-time vocational agriculture teacher, who was responsible for the three agriculture programs, and four part-time teachers, one for each of the other four center programs. Teachers were employed on a nine month basis. The agriculture teacher had been hired an additional three months to teach a summer job program sponsored by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA).

One school official interviewed, observed that the expectations of teachers graduating from teacher training programs may not include serving students from more than one community in the same class. The question of paying for travel expense and travel time for teachers who are required to travel between schools as a part of their center teaching assignment was also raised by interviewed individuals.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the Heartland Center was aimed toward three major objectives:

1. Development of occupational competencies necessary to enter an occupation.
2. Development of occupational competencies that allow advanced placement in post-secondary programs.
3. In-depth exploration of occupations to assist students in the career planning process.

Objective three was emphasized by one official interviewed as being especially important.

The model office, construction, foods occupations, and model store programs provided a single one-year, two-hour-per-day course schedule. Each of these programs counted as two credits on students' records. Secretarial occupations, or model office, was available to juniors and seniors and provided learning experiences concerned with coordination of office responsibilities, generation of communication, and facilitation of office functions. Construction occupations, offered for grade twelve, concerned all major phases of residential construction from financing to finishing. General merchandise retailing occupations or model store, was available to grades ten through twelve. This program concerned various marketing functions and tasks preformed by retail employees and management in retail stores. Foods occupations, open to twelfth graders, concerned planning, preparing, and serving food on a quantity basis.

The vocational agriculture program consisted of three courses. An agriculture mechanics course was offered as a one-year two-credit course to students in grades eleven and twelve and met for two hours per day. This course concerned materials handling, buildings and convenience electrification, farm mechanics shop, welding, machinery maintenance, power hydraulics, and farm tractor service, maintenance, and trouble shooting. The second vocational agriculture course, agriculture production, was available to students in grades ten through twelve and was scheduled for two-hour periods. It differed from the other programs in the center in that, although full-year enrollment was encouraged, students could enroll for only one or two quarters. The agriculture production course focused on crop and livestock production, marketing, and farm maintenance and management. The third vocational agriculture course, agriculture exploration, met one hour per day for one semester and was available to grades nine and ten. Curriculum concerned occupational orientation to varied aspects of agriculture such as crop and livestock production, Future Farmers of America, and supervised occupational experience.

In addition to the agriculture courses offered during the academic year, an agriculture production summer coop experience had been initiated. This involved 120 hours of instruction including thirty hours of organized classroom instruction and field trips, and ninety hours of individual work experience.

It was pointed out in the interviews that a goal in making center curricular decisions was to provide a set of balanced, well-rounded offerings ranging across manufacturing, business, service and agriculture domains. Considerations reported in selecting programs to be offered included community preferences, teachers' qualifications, advisory committee input, and balance with other programs available to school district youth. Community involvement was evident in the curriculum decision-making process. For example, a steering committee had helped to determine curriculum components for the agriculture program, the most recent addition to the curriculum. Advisory committees for programs were composed of community leaders. Local field trips and guest speakers from the communities and the surrounding geographic area were incorporated into center programs. A community adult education program had recently been initiated as part of the center curriculum.

A work experience program for the disadvantaged was being considered as a future addition to the center curriculum. No cooperative work experience programs were offered through the center at the time of the interviews but participation in such a program was considered a possible future requirement of all students enrolled in the vocational agriculture programs.

Scheduling

Center class periods were 100 minutes in length. Several individuals interviewed referred to scheduling problems presented by the two-hour classes or the transportation requirements connected with center courses. It was pointed out that the two-hour class schedules caused students to miss other electives. For example, it was reported that college bound students needed to take college preparatory classes offered in their home school; scheduling conflicts between center courses and individual school district music and foreign languages courses were reported; transportation time associated with enrollment in center courses was also cited as a factor in students' missing home school courses.

While most comments implied that the main conflicts were with elective courses in the individual school districts, one informant indicated that conflicts also occurred with non-electives such as history and English.

The school districts had not synchronized their daily schedules.

Transportation

Transportation of students between Pine River and Backus was accomplished by bus. The round trip of eighteen miles required twenty minutes. Students from Backus were transported to Pine River twice a day, five days per week. Pine River students were transported to Backus (for model office) once per day, five days per week. Since agriculture exploration was a semester course offered in both Backus and Pine River, students were not transported for this offering.

Students

Students enrolled in center programs were predominantly juniors and seniors. Some students were enrolled in more than one center program.

Table 33 shows the center student drop-out rate for 1978 and 1979. Most dropouts were reported to have poor school attendance records in general.

Table 33. Number of students dropping center programs.

	1978	1979
Number of students who dropped out of Center programs	6	2
Number of Center dropouts who were also school dropouts	2	1

Source: Vocational director.

Perceptions of School Personnel and Community Members

Views of community members and school administrators regarding the center are summarized below. A view expressed by one community representative was particularly poignant with respect to community openness to educational and other innovations: "We're ten years behind here. That's where we ought to be so we can learn from others' mistakes."

Views of school officials regarding the center varied widely from unconditional support to highly critical. For example, one said his board was very supportive of the center and did not question the financial expenditures it required. This board was reported to have assumed a double share of the financial responsibilities for the center. Other officials expressed the view that the center was viewed as a high expense item and that if teacher cuts were necessary, the center would be the first hit with cuts. Others spoke of the difficulties they perceived in transportation and scheduling--this included perceptions that students disliked riding a bus to center programs and had difficulty in associating with students from the other school districts. School rivalry was perceived to be associated with student attitudes toward students from the other school district.

One official stated that unless students wanted programs badly enough it was difficult to overcome the time, transportation, and scheduling conflicts associated with enrollment in center programs. Another official elaborated on the students served by center programs: "Vocational courses serve a segment of kids not served by college preparatory subjects. While college-bound kids may feel center programs are unappealing, these programs are holding some kids in school and not diminishing the opportunity college-bound kids have to explore their interests too." Center courses were seen by this official as providing a

natural progression for students to post-secondary area vocational technical institute programs and as providing educational options appropriate for the communities involved in the center. The problems for small rural schools in offering curricular options for students were apparent in this official's comment that pooling together by school districts was necessary to get enough students to offer vocational courses and that careful curricular decisions need to be made.

One school official pointed out that alternatives to centers, such as arranging for secondary students to attend area vocational technical institutes part-time on a tuition basis were plausible.

The primary problems associated with the center were perceived as being cost, time, transportation, and enrollment. The primary advantages were seen as expanded curricular options for students, orientation to, exploration of, and preparation for occupations, and better service to all segments of the student body.

One official summed his view of the center with respect to his own experience: "My experience here with the vocational center has been the one I've had the most interest in and frustration with."

Some sharing between Backus and Pine River schools was occurring outside the center structure. For example, a Backus student reportedly took art in Pine River and Pine River special education students were transported to Backus for classes. Courses in both schools were reported to be open to students from the other school. Two-hour blocks of time were provided to Pine River students if they wished to enroll in a course in another school. It was reported that students had not taken advantage of this opportunity because of the time commitment involved.

One informant viewed the role of the state in moving school districts into a posture of cooperation as extremely important and commented about the need for the state to provide incentives for school districts to cooperate.

Summary

The Heartland Center had experienced a stormy history. However, the conflicts it experienced resulted in the emergence of new ideas and new solutions. One would anticipate that, under a different set of conditions, the center, having existed for eight years, would have reached a stable level. A series of "new beginnings" and some measure of instability were readily observed.

A number of community members were involved with the center in one way or another. It seemed that most of these people were already involved with the school as an employee or board member so that in total, relatively few new community contacts were established as a result of the center.

The main concerns expressed by administrators about the center were cost, transportation, and schedule conflicts. In general, views expressed seemed to indicate a perception that the center programs were not for college-bound students.

It seemed apparent that the core of support for the center concept was lodged in Pine River. This was evident in the strongly supportive statements by school officials and in the evidence of their leadership in developing and maintaining the center.

It was not clear that the Pequot Lakes school system was necessarily worse off for no longer being associated with the center. It still offered the two vocational programs that had been part of the center to its own students and gave Pequot Lakes students the opportunity to attend the Brainerd AVTI, twenty-five miles south of Pequot Lakes on highway 371, as an alternative to the center. Depending on the number of students who used this option and the tuition rates, this alternative may have been less costly than participating as a

member of the Center. This alternative was more feasible for Pequot Lakes than for the other two schools since the latter were located further away from Brainerd.

CHAPTER V

CONSUMER HOMEMAKING PROGRAMS

All three school districts offered consumer home economics programs. Those in Pine River and Backus are described in this section.

Size

The Pine River school offered home economics at junior and senior high levels. Spring enrollments for each grade level are presented in Table 34.

Table 34. Home economics spring semester enrollments, Pine River school district, 1980.

Grade	M	F	Total
7th Grade	10	9	19
8th Grade	10	9	19
9th Grade	8	25	33
10-12th Grade	-	-	35

Source: Home economics teacher.

Table 35 indicates the current and most recent enrollment in each senior high quarter home economics offering in the Pine River school. At the time of the interviews the senior high teacher was teaching the occupational foods course through the Heartland Vocational Center and the Pine River consumer clothing and child development courses. Enrollments indicate that the proportion of males to females is smaller in the senior high offerings than in the junior high offerings. Available data for the Backus home economics program was less detailed than that for Pine River. Backus enrollment in home economics courses, grades 7-12, was 188 students, including 131 females and 57 males. Courses were one semester in length at seventh and eighth grade levels and one quarter in length in grades nine through twelve.

Facilities and Equipment

Three rooms comprised the home economics facilities in the Pine River school: a food laboratory, a family living room, and a clothing room. These rooms were shared by the junior and senior high home economics programs and were also occupied by health, reading, driver's training, and special education classes. Because the rooms were constantly occupied by classes, the senior high home economics teacher was not able to spend her preparation period in her classroom.

Facilities in the consumer homemaking program were up-to-date in terms of equipment. Because they were fully scheduled with classes described above, a play-school experience involving young children had not been incorporated in the home economics curriculum since this experience required special adaptation of space making it less suitable as a general classroom.

Food laboratory facilities included five stations. The clothing laboratory contained ten sewing machines. Home economics program equipment was shared by the Heartland Vocational Center occupational foods program, a homemaker's group, and the drama club.

Table 35. Current or most recent enrollments in senior high school home economics courses, Pine River school district, 1980.

Course Title	Grade Level	Length of Courses	Enrollment in Current or Most Recent Offering			Freq. of Offering		
			M	F	Total	2 per year	1 per year	Once in 2-3 yrs
1. Consumer Foods	10-12	qtr.	6	10	16	x		
2. Consumer Clothing	10-12	qtr.	0	14	14			x
3. Consumer Housing	10-12	qtr	11	6	17			x
4. Consumer Education	10-12	qtr.	5	17	22			x
5. Family Living I	10-12	qtr.	1	7	8		x	
6. Family Living II	10-12	qtr.	5	16	21		x	
7. Child Dev. I	10-12	qtr.	0	13	13		x	
8. Child Dev. II	10-12	qtr.	0	10	10		x	
9. Family Foods	10-12	qtr.	3	9	12			x
10. Sewing for Home	10-12	qtr.	0	12	12			x
11. Sewing for Others	10-12	qtr.	0	15	15			x
12. Children's Clothing	10-12	qtr.	0	16	16			x
13. Sewing Under-garments	10-12	qtr.	0	8	8			x
14. Home Furnishings	10-12	qtr	1	6	7			x
15. Speciality Foods	10-12	qtr.	3	8	11			x
TOTAL			35	167	202			

Source: Home economics teacher.

Broken equipment was replaced every year. Purchase of a microwave oven and two additional sewing machines was planned.

The senior high teacher indicated that future plans included the possibility of using the home economics facilities in Backus for courses in housing and home furnishings.

The home economics program in Backus was initiated in 1975. Backus home economics facilities were located in temporary buildings adjacent to the school building. A classroom and a foods and clothing laboratory comprised the space which totaled 768 square feet. A mathematics class also used the classroom. The food laboratory contained four units. Equipment for the program was viewed by the home economics teacher as adequate. Her future plans included the addition of some small equipment items.

Finances

Home economics teachers at Pine River reported adequate budgets for purchasing teaching materials, replacing equipment, and purchasing supplies. Adding equipment was reported as more difficult, although the purchase of some added equipment was being planned at the time of the interview. The junior and senior high teachers at Pine River ordered supplies, equipment, and materials as a department.

The Backus teacher viewed school finances as the single most important factor in making consumer homemaking courses available to Backus students. Budgets for the junior and senior high consumer homemaking programs at Backus and Pine River are shown in Table 36.

Table 36. Consumer homemaking program budget, Pine River and Backus schools, 1978-80.

	Pine River		Backus	
	1978-79	1979-80	1978-79	1979-80
Licensed Salaries	5500	9514	9015	10190
Travel, Instruction/ Administration	300	300	200	200
Equipment	0	0	0	0
Net Budget	5800	9814	9215	10390

Source: Home economics teachers, school superintendents.

Teaching Materials

Pine River junior high home economics teaching materials were shared with physical education, health, and art teachers. Most of the shared materials were nutrition education resources. Textbooks were not used in the junior high program; duplicated handouts were used. Most filmstrips were rented from an area resource center. At the senior high level in Pine River, textbooks were used in family living, child development, and consumer foods. It was reported that audio visual materials may be shared with the Backus teacher in the future.

At the senior high level, nutrition films and handouts were shared with the health teacher; family life educational materials were shared with the social studies teacher. Backus and Pine River teachers had exchanged listings of the home economics resources in each school. The junior and senior high teacher in Pine River reported that they were in close communication and shared resources as well, particularly audio visual materials.

The Backus teacher reported sharing teaching materials not only with Pine River, but also with Pequot Lakes. She reported a highly cooperative spirit existing among this group of teachers.

Staff

In Pine River, two teachers were responsible for the junior and senior high home economics programs and the Heartland Vocational Center foods occupations program. The two teachers appeared to work closely together in developing curriculum, and in maintaining and developing the department and instructional program.

The senior high teacher was employed 66 percent by Pine River on a nine and one-half month contract. Her schedule included teaching vocational home economics courses, supervising a study hall, and a preparation hour. She also was the junior class sponsor and the prom advisor. The remaining 33 percent of her time was devoted to teaching the occupational foods program in the Heartland Vocational Center which paid one-third of her salary. She had eight years of teaching experience, all of them in her current position.

The junior high teacher had been in her position at Pine River for 16 of her 26 years of teaching. Her background also included five full-time years of nonteaching work experience. She was employed full-time by the Pine River school and taught the nonvocational home economics courses. In addition, she worked at a restaurant which she and her husband owned. This teacher's assignment also included one hour of preparation time and one hour of study hall.

The Backus home economics teacher had nine years of teaching experience, five of which were at Backus. She taught all the Backus home economics offerings, grades seven through twelve. She was employed on a nine month contract with an additional two weeks of extended employment. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she advised the Future Homemakers of America Club and was the senior class advisor.

Curriculum

In Pine River, the seventh grade course was a semester offering, offered twice per year. Eighth and ninth grade home economics offerings were quarter courses offered four times per year. Senior high home economics courses were also a quarter in length. Table 35 indicates the fifteen quarter length courses offered in the senior high.

Goals for the home economics program at Pine River focused on helping students establish and achieve goals and values meaningful to personal, family, and community living: using economic resources wisely; performing tasks associated with maintaining a home; and understanding and supporting the growth and development of the young. The curriculum was reported to have a sequential nature in which junior high offerings provided the basis (viewed as foods, nutrition, sewing, child care, and understanding others) on which senior high courses were built.

Pine River teachers reported various sources of influence on their curriculum decisions. The junior high teacher indicated that her major sources of influence included the type of industry in the community, her own interests in and knowledge of the subject matter, and the facilities and equipment available. This teacher also reported that state curriculum guides, textbook content and reference materials, and community values, norms, and conditions had some influence. Future plans called for the maintenance of present curricular offerings.

The senior high teacher reported that major influences on her curricular decisions included students' future plans for work, textbook content and reference materials, type of industry and business in the community, her own knowledge of subject matter, facilities and

equipment available, the program advisory committee, community values, norms and conditions, and supervised occupational experience programs. This teacher commented that the community's view of home economics tended to be limited to cooking and sewing. The senior high teacher reported that factors having some influence on her curriculum decisions included suggestions from parents of students, state curriculum guides, and administrative decree. Future plans reported by the Pine River senior high teacher for the home economics program included maintaining present offerings and the possibility of joint offerings with Backus.

No home economics student organization had been available in Pine River since 1974. Sports activities were cited as a factor in the decision to discontinue the student organization.

One semester each of seventh and eighth grade home economics was offered at Backus and was required of all students. Seventh grade curriculum focused on food preparation and nutrition; eighth grade curriculum focused on textiles and clothing. At ninth grade, home economics was an elective with choices of courses in family living, home furnishings and consumer education, clothing, and foods. Students in grades ten through twelve could choose from among several offerings: one in family living, two in clothing, three in foods, one in child development, one in home furnishings, one in crafts, and one in consumer education.

In determining what to teach, the Backus teacher relied most heavily on suggestions from parents of students, instructor interest and knowledge of subject matter, advisory committee recommendations, community values, norms and conditions, and student attitudes. Some influence was attributed to state curriculum guides, students' "life long plans," administrative decree, and facilities and equipment available. A Future Homemakers of America Club was available in Backus, and all home economics students were members of the club. The Backus teacher cited involvement of students in sports activities as a barrier in developing the FHA club.

Students

Students in both Pine River and Backus home economics programs were almost exclusively Caucasian. Home economics teachers in both communities indicated that students' career and life goals were focused on the short term rather than on a long range view. For girls, getting married and being a homemaker was the most predominant life goal. The teachers reported that their students tended to use what they learned in home economics in their every-day living.

The teachers in both Pine River and Backus reported no serious student discipline problems although they did comment that students' tendency not to look ahead made it difficult for them to apply themselves in the study of some areas of home economics subject matter.

In Backus about 80 percent of the home economics students lived in town and 20 percent lived in the country. In Pine River, the reverse was true with 75 percent of the students living in the country and 25 percent in town.

Perceptions of School Personnel and Community Members

Home economics teachers in Pine River reported good administrative support for their programs in terms of budget and class size. Some topics covered in home economics were viewed as controversial by the administration and there was negotiation as to what these should be titled. In some cases, social studies credit had been attached to home economics offerings (e.g. "The Elderly and America").

Pine River home economics teachers viewed other teachers in the school as supportive of their program. At the senior high level, communication between social studies and home economics was mentioned.

One Pine River school official described the school as "big enough to offer a full program in home economics" and indicated that he thought a child care occupations program might be a curricular expansion that would serve students in Pine River. This official saw the main benefits derived from home economics as the development of homemaking skills--particularly canning and sewing (he viewed these as useful with respect to the low socio-economic status of many families in the school district). Another Pine River school official perceived the benefits of home economics as expansion and exploration of vocational possibilities and helping students to achieve personal and family living goals.

The Backus teacher perceived a predominant number of her colleagues as having passive attitudes toward home economics. A Backus school official perceived the home economics program as providing "a junior and senior high experience." He described the main benefits to students who enrolled in home economics as vocational exploration which "normal" curriculum cannot provide ("It is important to provide a vocational rather than academic experience"), and as providing needed basic skills for human survival. In his words, "Food and clothing are essential for anyone." He believed students liked cooking and eating the most and tests, lectures, housing, child development, and consumer education the least. He stated that he thought it was hard to get boys involved in crafts. Another Backus school official stated, "We need home economics because we need home management skills training even more today than we did 10, 20, or so years ago because with both parents working, parents aren't available for children to observe or for parents to teach children these things."

The parents interviewed indicated they thought the home economics program was an important program. They tended to speak of the program in terms of cooking and sewing, although one mother mentioned the survival and practical living skills the home economics program had helped her sons develop. One mother thought the program should be provided for all students. One parent suggested that 4-H and adult education were additional ways of providing home economics education to students.

A citizen advisory committee, associated with the Backus home economics program, met twice per year. Membership represented parents, farmers, and business people. In one member's view, "Even if students don't use home economics as a career, they will have the skills which will be useful to them the rest of their lives. Such basic knowledge for every day life is needed."

Summary

Home economics programs in Pine River and Backus appeared to emphasize foods and clothing curriculum although housing, child development, family living, and consumer education areas were also represented. Community and administrative support for the programs appeared to vary between the towns and the individuals interviewed. The Pine River program was more established than the more recent Backus program. Communication between teachers in the two towns appeared to be well-developed. It appeared that the role of the senior high Pine River teacher in both the Center and the Pine River program and the location of the occupational foods program in the Pine River school were two factors in the occupational foods center program being viewed as an integral part of the Pine River home economics program. Benefits of students enrolled in the home economics programs were viewed by school officials and communities as primarily skill development (e.g. marketable skills, skills applicable to running a home, skills for human survival).

CHAPTER VI

OCCUPATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAM

The foods occupations course was the only home economics offering in the Heartland Vocational Center. It was one of the original offerings included when the Center was initiated in 1972. This program shared curriculum, facilities, equipment, and teaching materials with the Pine River senior and junior high school home economics program.

Size

The course enrolled ten students (three males and seven females) in 1979-80. It was reported that at the beginning of the 1979-80 school year, there were no students enrolled in the program. Several informants reported enrollment problems with the program, implying that such problems had existed in previous years. One school official attributed enrollment problems to its two-hour schedule. "It is hard to get students to commit themselves to two hours for a full year--it greatly reduces the number of things they can do."

Facilities and Equipment

Facilities and equipment for the occupational foods program were located in the Pine River high school home economics department and consisted of the consumer home economics food laboratory. A commercial microwave oven was located in the foods laboratory specifically for the foods occupations program but beyond this, little equipment was available for the occupational program. All future plans for equipment were aimed at the needs of the consumer homemaking program.

Finances

The budget for the occupational foods program for 1979-80 is shown in Table 37. The table shows the Heartland Center invested $7,726 in the food occupations program.

Table 37. Home economics occupational foods program budget, Heartland Center, 1979-80.

Budget Item	Dollars Budgeted
Licensed salaries (teachers)	$3,326
Travel, instruction, administration	$1,000
Equipment	$3,400
Total Budget	$7,726

Source: Vocational director.

Management

The day to day management of the foods occupations program was the responsibility of the teacher. General program administration was the responsibility of the center vocational director. The foods occupations teacher was responsible to two sets of administrators--the Pine River school administration and the vocational center administration.

Staff

The senior high home economics teacher was employed on a 33 percent basis to teach the foods occupations course two hours per day. One-third of her salary was paid by the center. She had initiated the foods occupations program when the center began. Adult home economics courses offered through the center were taught by another teacher.

Curriculum

The foods occupations course was offered as a full-year course but was designed in a two-semester framework identified as Foods Occupations I and II. The teacher described the course as an orientation to commercial food service with costing procedures, codes and laws regarding sanitation and inspection, and quality standards stressed. Other areas covered in the course included food poisoning, selling a menu, bakery business, institutional food service, cycle menus and the operation of institutional equipment. The consumer foods course was seen as a base for the occupational foods course and two advanced consumer foods courses.

Factors seen by the teacher as having a great deal of influence on curriculum decisions in the foods occupations program included state curriculum guides, students' future plans for life long work, textbooks and reference materials, type of industry or business in the community, instructor knowledge of subject matter, facilities and equipment available, advisory committee recommendations, and students' occupational experience. The teacher expressed that providing the prerequisites students will need to enter occupational roles was an aim of the curriculum. She commented that since the surrounding geographical area emphasized tourism, foods occupations jobs were available.

The teacher's future plans regarding curriculum entailed maintaining the present offering.

Teaching Materials

Few special teaching materials for the food occupations program were indicated. There was a great emphasis on sharing materials between junior and senior high teachers which implied such sharing primarily involved consumer homemaking materials. Books were reported to be used in the foods occupations program.

Scheduling

The foods occupations course met for two hours once per day for a full year.

Students

The teacher reported that eighty-five percent of the students currently enrolled in the foods occupations program had previously enrolled in home economics courses. Student discipline was not reported to be a problem because "most students who are in the class want to be there; they chose it as an elective."

The teacher reported that the primary reason students enrolled in occupational foods was to aid in pursuing a food service career. No students dropped out of the program in 1978-79 or 1979-80. Students included sophomores, juniors, and seniors although the program was designated in the center curriculum descriptions as a twelfth grade program. Foods occupations program students indicated that their reasons for enrolling in the program included "learning to cook, enjoy cooking, a change in schoolwork, and future career interest."

Student Organization

There was no occupational home economics student organization connected with the occupational foods program. A club was reported in operation in 1974 but had been discontinued. Availability of many alternative activities, especially sports, was the reason cited for not having a student organization.

Perceptions of School Personnel and Community Members

An advisory committee served the foods occupations program. This committee met twice in 1979-80. Community sectors represented included parents, other vocational teachers, food service businesses, and local institutions which serve food. Some members were school personnel (i.e. a school lunch cook, the junior high school home economics teacher). Two advisory committee members were interviewed, one parent, and one business owner. Contributions of the foods occupations program as seen by these individuals were:

1. Its service to many boys, several of whom have an interest in foods occupations as a career. The growth of co-educational enrollment in the Pine River consumer homemaking program was attributed to the exposure boys had to home economics in the food occupations program.

2. The expansion of educational opportunity it represented for all students.

3. Its provision of work force members trained in the area of foods occupations.

4. Its role in upgrading the knowledge level of the work force (through its graduates who enter the work force) particularly in the area of sanitation.

Major strengths of the program reported by advisory members included the food preparation experience students had ("vs. sitting listening to a lecture"), a well-established curriculum, and good school board support. The active "hands-on" experiences provided to students in the program were seen as increasing students' interest. Weaknesses were seen as low enrollment, lack of equipment, and the need for community work locations to be expanded beyond the Pine River area.

Advisory committee members reported that students tended to stay with other students from their home communities rather than mingling with students from another community in their group work. The committee members interviewed saw themselves as "providing information concerning what students should be taught for restaurant work."

In discussing relationships between the program and the school, advisory members commented that the community in general was probably not aware of the program. While some restaurants were reported to offer on-the-job training for students, most of these opportunities were the result of students' efforts rather than as a result of formal arrangements between the program and community food businesses.

Interviews with school officials revealed that the occupational emphasis in the foods occupations program and in other center programs was viewed as appropriate for Pine River because "kids will enter work rather than college--this is not an intellectual community."

One official thought the occupational areas of home economics had more focus than did consumer homemaking programs. He also saw a need to stir up interest among students for home economics and saw the occupational foods program as a means of generating such interest.

Administrators saw enrollment as a major problem with the foods occupations program. Benefits to students as a result of the program were seen as expansion and exploration of vocational possibilities. There was some concern expressed by administrators that insufficient use was made of community businesses in the program. Possible reasons for this were identified as the teacher's background and experience in consumer homemaking, and insufficient emphasis on public relations. A representative from Backus commented "the program needs to be sold to Backus students; they see it as a Pine River course and not as a Backus course. Backus students know very little about the program in the center." He went on to say that the program was initiated because there was a felt need for it and because "a few people" had exerted pressure for it. "We use the center because it is there and we are a part of it. We wouldn't provide an occupational foods course if we were not part of the center."

In discussing the occupational foods program offered through the vocational center and located in the Pine River school, parents saw the lack of on-the-job training experiences in the program as a limitation. Some referred to a saturated restaurant market in the area; others mentioned that since most restaurants in the area served liquor and could not hire under-age students, students had difficulty finding work experience opportunities. A Backus parent commented on the travel to Pine River for Backus students in this program as a weakness.

Summary

In summary, the foods occupations program appeared to serve a small number of students, to be limited by the school facilities and materials provided for it, and had apparently not involved facilities external to the schools as a way of addressing the facilities problem. The community was involved in the program in an advisory capacity but the potential for community exposure that advisory committees can provide was limited by the choice of several school personnel as members. Community involvement was further limited by the weak work experience component in the program.

CHAPTER VII

VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

The vocational agriculture program was the most recent addition to the center curriculum. The program was initiated in 1979-80, the year the site-visit for this study was conducted. The program was located in the new center building in Pine River and also in Backus where one semester course was taught. Vocational agriculture programs had not existed in any of the other three schools during the 1970's and may or may not have existed in prior decades. When Pequot Lakes withdrew from the center, the auto mechanics and transportation programs that were housed in Pequot Lakes were dropped from the center curriculum. One informant saw the vocational agriculture program as providing an opportunity to continue a course in mechanics in the center.

Size

Student enrollments in the three agriculture courses offered in 1979-80 are shown in Table 38. Nine Backus students were enrolled in the program. The remaining students were from Pine River.

Table 38. Number of students in Heartland Center vocational agriculture courses, 1979-80.

Course	Number of Students
Ag Exploration (Grades 9-10)	28
Ag Mechanics (Grades 11-12)	27
Ag Production (Grades 11-12)	18

Source: Vocational agriculture teacher.

Facilities and Equipment

The agriculture facilities in the new center building were located approximately 200 yards from the Pine River senior high school. The new center building was a steel structure with a concrete floor. The facilities provided little storage space in either the classroom or shop area. The latter did not have a large overhead door which limited opportunity to bring in farm machinery or to construct livestock buildings or equipment. The shop facilities were shared with the center building construction course; the classroom was also used by Brainerd Area Vocational Technical Institute for adult farm management classes on a rental contract basis. These adult classes served farmers in the Heartland area.

External to the constructed facilities, the instructor was developing a small land laboratory on a part of the five acres of land surrounding the building which the center owned.

Facility needs as seen by the teacher included the addition of a greenhouse, additional storage space, an overhead door, and tools and equipment for vocational agriculture.

Finances

The budget for the vocational agriculture program in 1979-80 is shown in Table 39.

The teacher was required to travel between Pine River and Backus which accounted for at least a portion of the travel budget. Travel dollars were allocated for travel expenses only--not travel time.

Table 39. Vocational agriculture program budget, Heartland Center, 1979-80.

Budget Items	Dollars Budgeted
Licensed Salaries (teacher 12 month salary included)	$14,186
Travel, instruction, administration	$ 1,500
Equipment	0
Net Budget	$15,686

Source: Vocational director.

Management

The vocational agriculture teacher was responsible to the center director and for the day-to-day operation of the program. Administrators in the Pine River and Backus schools relied on the center director to handle problems encountered in the agriculture and other center programs. Since the director was available only part-time, the teacher frequently handled discipline problems alone.

Staff

The vocational agriculture teacher was employed full-time by the center to teach three agriculture courses. He was employed on a nine month contract for the school year and on a separate contract during the summer. His 1979-80 assignment consisted of teaching a one-hour agriculture exploration semester course twice a year, a two-hour agricultural mechanics course and a two-hour agricultural production course. He was also responsible for supervising students' occupational experience programs and for serving as adviser to the Future Farmers of America (FFA) student organization. The teacher had no teaching experience prior to being employed by the center.

Curriculum

The one-semester, one-hour-per-day agriculture exploration course was designed as a survey course which introduced students to a range of agricultural areas. Curricular areas included basic plant and soil science (soils texture, classification structure, testing, judging), farm management and record keeping, introduction to animal science (selection, feeding, care, management, beef, sheep, and swine), introduction to crops (horticulture and specialty crops), and agricultural resources management (water, forest, soils, and wildlife).

The production course provided two credits and met two hours per day for the entire school year. It was intended as a full-year course but students were allowed to register by quarter. This course included crop identification, grading, weed identification, production, harvesting, storing, tillage, marketing, and irrigation. Hay, row, grain, fruit, and vegetable crops were covered. Beef and swine production and management and dairy and sheep science were also covered. One quarter was devoted to farm tractors and power units, agricultural machinery, and forest natural resources equipment.

The mechanics course also was offered two hours per day and provided two credits for a full year of enrollment. The course focused on materials handling, buildings, electrification, welding, machinery maintenance, ag power, hydraulics, and farm tractor service and maintenance.

In addition to the three courses offered during the school year an agriculture production occupational experience program had been developed. This involved thirty hours of classes or field trips during July and August and ninety hours of work experience supervised by the agriculture instructor or job supervisor.

In determining subject matter to be taught in vocational agriculture courses, four factors were especially important to the instructor: students' supervised occupational experience programs, suggestions from parents of students, contests students would enter, and instructor knowledge. Factors having some influence on curriculum decisions were state curriculum guides, students' future plans for life-long work, textbook content and reference materials, type of industry and business in the community, instructor interest, and administrative decree.

The FFA chapter, as an integral part of the agriculture curriculum, had encountered two problems. Lack of involvement by Backus students was a problem as was controversy surrounding what name should be emblazoned on the FFA jacket. Apparently the center governing board ruled that the name appearing on the jackets would be "Heartland." Students, however, wanted the name of their community on their jackets.

Possible future developments in the vocational agriculture program as seen by the teacher included development of courses in farm management, specialty crops, and energy conservation (including fuel alcohol). He further suggested that an adult agriculture course could be of benefit in the community. He commented on the importance of administrative support from both Pine River and Backus in generating a viable program for students.

Materials

A basic set of reference books were used for both the production agriculture and mechanics classes. The teacher perceived a need for additional student materials.

Scheduling

The vocational agriculture program was scheduled throughout the day in such a way that students could take both production agriculture and agricultural mechanics if they were able to get their other subjects into their schedule. Agricultural mechanics was scheduled for two hours in Pine River in the morning for grades eleven and twelve. Production agriculture was scheduled for two hours in Pine River in the afternoon. Backus students were bused to Pine River for these classes. Agricultural exploration for grades nine and ten was scheduled in Pine River during fall semester and in Backus during spring semester. The teacher traveled to Backus each day to conduct the one-hour class during the spring semester.

Students

The agriculture teacher reported that agriculture students' post high school plans did not appear to include college. Farming and logging were reported by the teacher to be of high interest to the students. A number of students were reported to have started vegetable crop projects in their supervised occupational experience programs.

According to the agriculture teacher, about 75 percent of the agriculture students lived in the country, 25 percent resided in town. About 70 percent of the agriculture students were dues-paying FFA members.

The teacher felt that one of the major problems associated with making agriculture education available to rural students was that of educating female students about the opportunities in agriculture and the potential value of this area to them. Twenty-seven male students were enrolled in the agriculture mechanics course; sixteen males and one female were enrolled in the production agricultural course.

Perceptions of School and Community Members

An advisory committee for the agriculture program consisted of parents, school board members, the county extension agent, farmers, and students. The committee met twice per year. One committee member indicated in an interview that it was not unrealistic for students to consider farming as an occupation. He felt that there were opportunities to farm in the area.

The local Pine River newspaper was reported by the agriculture teacher to give the agriculture program and FFA very good coverage.

A Pine River school official, who was also a farmer, indicated that both the agriculture and home economics programs in the Center allowed options for students that were appropriate for the community. He suggested that the agriculture program could facilitate agri-business careers for students and that the program was an ideal way to hold students in school in a work-oriented community such as Pine River. "Kids do ag at home. It fits and dovetails with efforts of the community to interest kids in something. Town kids also benefit from the ag experience--it gives kids something to be interested in. The more ag we can do and afford, the better. Surveys regarding kids' interests have not been valid when they showed lack of interest in ag in the early 70's."

Comments made by parents regarding their child's experience in the vocational agriculture program indicated that the program had increased their child's interest in agriculture; that they liked the exposure their child was getting in an agricultural enterprise they did not have on their own farm; and that they had noticed an increase in their child's questions about farming and farm problems. These parents expressed concern about school support for the vocational agricultural program and felt that parents needed to be partners in educating children about agriculture.

One school official from Backus felt that the production agriculture course was not particularly attractive to Backus students because the majority of farms in the Backus area were farmed on a second income basis. He perceived that most farmers were involved in full-time jobs off the farm and were farming on a part-time basis. He felt that logging was more popular than farming and commented that there were four or five saw mills in the district. Consequently, he saw the exploration course (the course offered in Backus) as a primary benefit and viewed exposure of students to agriculture/agribusiness as important because of job availability in this field.

The same official suggested that communication with Backus students regarding the vocational agriculture program should be greatly increased. He indicated that the Backus school would not have considered having a vocational agriculture program if it was not part of the center program and that if Backus had to cut a teacher, the board and administra-

tion would have to look carefully at the agriculture teaching position. He also alluded to scheduling conflicts associated with the agriculture classes: "Backus students cannot take band or choir if they opt for agriculture courses. It takes the 'cream of the crop' away from music."

A Pine River school official indicated that agriculture had not previously been provided through the school system because of a feeling of insufficient interest. Conditions he perceived as contributing to the establishment of an agriculture program in 1979-80: a) the president of the Pine River student council was a farmer and promoted the idea; b) the center director's background was in agriculture; c) school board membership changes which brought in board members who supported agriculture; d) the need for a mechanics course to replace the mechanics course lost by the center when Pequot Lakes withdrew; e) the number of potential students made the center a logical place to offer an agriculture program.

This official said that students appeared to like the agriculture exploration and agricultural mechanics programs the most and attributed this to the students' enjoyment in working with their hands. He felt the main benefit derived by students from participation in the agriculture program were opportunities to learn about mechanical things and to directly apply their learning (especially noncollege-bound students). He described agricultural mechanics as a good alternative to the auto mechanics program previously available in Pequot Lakes.

Looking toward the future, the Pine River school official indicated that the program was too new to know what improvements were needed. One area he saw as appropriately receiving increased emphasis was practical experience--e.g., work experience, gardening, work in a greenhouse.

Another Pine River school official spoke strongly in support of agriculture education and saw three main benefits for participating students: the stimulation of interest in education and the exposure of youngsters and parents to better methods and to the idea that education will help them in their lives. This administrator saw a need to incorporate logging and trapping with farming and thought this was being done by the agriculture teacher. He indicated that he would also like to see the agriculture program incorporate a computer and tree farming emphasis.

The agriculture teacher reported receiving strong support from the Pine River school system. He reported receiving help with registration from the school staff and assistance from the Pine River administration with discipline.

Views regarding alternative ways to offer home economics and agriculture programs to rural students were expressed by school officials. A school board member said, "I don't see how we can do any more--we have to pool together to get enough students. There is a natural progression from these programs (i.e., center vocational education programs) to the AVTI's." Administrators identified adult education, county extension programs, and farm and home visits as alternative ways of providing agriculture and home economics education. One administrator thought these vehicles overlapped with secondary school-based vehicles to some extent but also reinforced each other and "fit together."

Cooperation with industry was seen by another administrator as a way of providing home economics and agriculture education to students in rural areas. Advisory committee members suggested evening vocational classes, extension programs, educational cooperative service unit (ECSU)-based night classes, and media-based approaches.

One administrator said that isolation was a problem--"being far away from large population areas where real expertise is available." He thought agriculture and home economics had limited visibility and that students didn't see the "real lifelong values of having knowledge in those areas."

Parents seemed to have very limited information about the school in general or about the agriculture and home economics program specifically.

Summary

The vocational agriculture program was the newest and most comprehensive program offered in the Center. It offered three courses to students and was the only Center program available to ninth grade students.

It seemed to have differential support from the cooperating schools with evidence of the most enthusiastic support coming from Pine River.

The need for a forestry as well as an agriculture production emphasis in the program was a consistent theme recurring through the interviews.

The facilities were adequate for providing an excellent program for students in the cooperative center. The curriculum seemed to have adequate scope and to meet the needs of students in the area.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The essential features of the decentralized secondary center pattern include a center governance structure, an organized program of courses associated with the center, a center administrative staff, a center teaching staff, a center budget and financing system, teaching materials and equipment that are owned or rented by the center, and multiple facilities that are owned or rented and used by the center. The feature which differentiates the decentralized center pattern from the centralized center pattern is the multiple facilities located in two or more of the member school districts.

The Heartland Vocational Center as a decentralized secondary center, had all the features identified above. A summary of the data associated with each of the questions identified in Chapter I that guided the case study is presented below.

1. What are the features of the decentralized secondary center cooperative arrangement?
   a. Governance, Management, and Legal Structures
      - Center governance structure separate from but related to member school districts
        Center board composed of school board members from participating schools
        Each member district equally represented on center board
        Regularly scheduled board meetings
        Center board makes center policy, own/rents center facilities, is legal fiscal agent with power to accept and disperse public funds; does not have power to levy bonds
        Superintendents serve as ex-officio members who attend board meetings but do not vote
        Executive committee, composed of the governing board chair, the vocational director, and the supervising superintendent, advisory to the vocational director
      - Steering committee composed of community representatives appointed by board to advise board on student needs and employment needs
      - Advisory committees for each career cluster curriculum appointed by the board to advise center staff on program development
      - Vocational director responsible for center management; reports to center governing board and to supervising superintendents
      - One member school district superintendent designated as supervising superintendent
        Authorizes documents
        Supervises vocational director
      - State joint powers law and vocational center legislation is legal basis
   b. Funding and Budgets
      - Center has its own budget
      - Center is a legal fiscal agent
      - Center receives state vocational aids
      - Center assesses participating school districts to cover its costs
   c. Staff
      - Vocational director is administrator
      - Full-time and/or part-time center instructors
      - Secretarial staff
   d. Services Provided
      - Vocational programs offered by the center to students in member school districts

e. Facilities
   - Located in more than one community
   - Owned or rented by center
   - House center programs and administrative offices
   - May include existing school facilities
   - Minimal adaptation of existing school facilities

2. How does the decentralized center work?
   a. Financing, Costs, and Cost Distribution
      - Basis for each school's contribution may involve:
        School enrollment
        User rate
        Ability to pay
      - Transportation costs for districts sending students to programs in other schools
      - Schools assessed to cover costs remaining after vocational aids received by center are deducted
   b. Scheduling
      - Daily two-hour time blocks for all or most center programs
      - Most offerings full year in length
      - Daily school schedules not synchronized
      - Center programs scheduled throughout the school day
   c. Transportation
      - Transportation required for center students enrolled in programs not located in their school
      - Students are program element most frequently transported; teacher may be transported
      - School buses used to transport students
      - One or more round trips per day for participating schools
      - Time required for round trip travel: 20 minutes
   d. Students
      - Eligible students for most programs intended as high school juniors and seniors; some sophomores may also enroll if space permits; ninth and tenth graders served by exploratory program
      - Range of ability levels
      - Homogeneous in background and socio-economic characteristics
      - Center programs viewed as serving primarily noncollege-bound students

3. How does the decentralized center fit with the characteristics of its setting?
   a. School District Characteristics
      - Participating school district enrollments small (average daily membership range = 299 to 975)
   b. Geographic Characteristics
      - Area served by decentralized center between 500 and 1,000 square miles (687 square miles in the case studied)
      - Pupil density is relatively sparse (ranged from 1.57 to 5.95 students per square mile in the case studied)
      - Moderate distance between participating communities (9 miles in case studied)
   c. Social Characteristics
      - Similar emphasis on education in participating communities
      - Participating communities similar in educational and socio-economic levels (withdrawing member more dissimilar on these characteristics)
      - Some rivalry between participating schools attributed to differences in community size and sports loyalties

4. What consequences does the decentralized center have for educational quality and access?
   a. Quality
      - Strengths
        1. Responsibility for administration and leadership clearly vested in the vocational director

2. Continuity in programs and staff possible
3. Facilities that are newly constructed are likely to be up-to-date
4. Center is subject to state regulations which impose a level of quality
5. Advisory committees provide opportunity for school and community interaction and cooperation

- Weaknesses
1. Student organization identity difficult to establish within the center
2. Center faculty have little exposure to school and community contexts of students enrolled in their programs who come from other schools
3. Existing facilities are likely to be used and adapted and may not adequately meet needs of programs
4. Staff specialization may be limited when existing school district faculty are used part time as center faculty

b. Access
- Strengths
1. Students have access to more vocational programs than they would have without the center
2. Access to vocational programs distributed equitably among participating schools
3. Increased total number of curricular offerings available to students
4. A school district can expand curriculum without bearing the entire cost and in areas where there are not enough students to justify a program in a single school

- Weaknesses
1. Some students must travel to gain access to desired program
2. Students may have to forgo some courses in their home schools in order to take center courses due to time required for travel and two-hour center course schedule
3. Tendency for some students to enroll in courses "that are at home" rather than travel to another school
4. Students in school districts which do not house given programs may have little direct exposure to and limited information about these programs

5. How might the decentralized center be modified?
a. Center courses might be scheduled two or three days per week with some school district courses scheduled similarly to reduce transportation time
b. The possibility of moving facilities and equipment between schools so that students would not have to travel might make programs more attractive
c. Teachers might travel between schools so that students are not required to move
d. Closed circuit television or video tapes might be used for presentations and demonstrations, and microcomputers might be used where possible to teach concepts and skills so that students could remain in their home schools and receive instruction some days each week
e. Reduce the length of center classes from two hours to one
f. Schedule center courses at beginning or end of the day to reduce scheduling conflict for students
g. Lengthen school day to reduce scheduling conflicts for students
h. Provide a teacher or aid to ride the bus with students and provide instruction or reading time during bus ride
i. Schedule a given program in each school or in some of the cooperating schools on alternate semesters or years. Teachers would then teach at different schools during different semesters or years but would not travel daily between school districts; this would require duplicate facilities and would not pool students from different schools

Conclusions

The decentralized center is an organizational entity with its own identity, structure, governance body and system, budget, staff, and programs. Its facilities are located in two or more communities and are likely to incorporate existing facilities of participating

school districts. Power and control are in the hands of a center board and the boards of each participating district who approve the action of the center board regarding budget, policies, and operation of the center. The vocational director, as the executive officer of the board, implements board policies and manages the center operation. The position of the vocational director also provides continuity, a clear leadership role for the center, and control of the quality of educational services provided by the center. The tendency for school district teachers to be employed part-time as center teachers leads to ambiguity in the supervision of center staff. Teachers are responsible to both their school district principal and the vocational director.

Geographic dispersion of facilities has implications for communication. For example, faculty meetings may involve driving several miles for teachers. Such meetings are likely to be an important element in keeping center staff informed and focused, as a team, on the center's mission. Communication between the vocational director and the administrators and officials in participating school districts is aided by the geographic dispersion of programs and consequent travel between districts required for the vocational director in supervising programs.

Geographic dispersion of facilities introduces the possibility of students or teachers traveling between sites. The Heartland case involved travel by both students and teachers. Teacher travel requires duplicate facilities at more than one site and raises issues of paying teachers for travel and travel time. Student travel eliminates the need for duplicate facilities but produces other problems such as scheduling conflicts with courses in the home school, resistance of students to traveling, and hesitance about taking courses with students from other schools. It would seem that such problems would not deter the student who is intensely interested in a center course offering but, for students with lukewarm interests, such deterrants may be just enough to send them to an alternative course in their own school for which they may have less interest. Geographic dispersion of facilities provides the opportunity for each participating district with a program to receive students from another district.

The decentralized center is fiscally organized in much the same way as is any type of center with its own budget and fiscal agent status. Like the centralized center, the decentralized center receives vocational aids and assesses school districts for remaining costs. The Heartland case offers some insight into the implications of various ways of assessing the remaining costs. Three principles were used as a basis for allocating costs in the Heartland case: potential usage, actual usage, and ability to pay. A potential usage principle is reflected in the use of 7-12 school enrollments in the assessment formula. This principle suggests that schools with larger student populations will have more students enroll in center programs and therefore, pay more. With an actual usage principle, a district's share of the costs is based on the number of students the school district enrolls in center programs. This principle has the positive impact of districts paying for what they get but has the potentially negative impact of districts holding down enrollment of their students in center programs to avoid the costs. No evidence of this practice was apparent but the potential for it does exist with an actual use formula.

The ability-to-pay principle depends on the use of foundation aids (or any other income factor) as a basis for determining cost assessments. The more money coming into a district, the more it pays for services rendered by the center. Because the foundation aid system in Minnesota provides more aid to districts with fewer local resources, the poorest districts end up paying the highest rates when foundation aids are used as the base. A fourth principle, allocating costs to a district on an equal share basis where remaining costs are split equally among participating districts, was not used by the Heartland Center. One cannot help but wonder if the weighted-vote incident would have been avoided if such a formula had been used. The formula that was used was complex and may have been more than a small factor in the dissension that this center experienced.

The tendency to use school district staff part-time as center staff may have its advantages in a period of declining enrollments but it also has some disadvantages. Teachers who happen to be in the system are less likely to have the degree of specialization desirable for occupationally oriented vocational classes. Likewise, the tendency to

use existing school district facilities for at least some programs is likely to incorporate less specialized, up-to-date facilities and equipment in center programs than would be the case if facilities were acquired specifically for center programs. There is also likely to be a cost tradeoff with existing facilities costing less to adapt than additional facilities cost to acquire. One concern with existing facilities is that they will undergo little adaptation.

The decentralized center did result in a net increase in the number of curricular offerings available to students in all school districts. Only one or two school district programs had been discontinued when the center was initiated and center programs were new programs for all districts. The expressions of school officials seemed to indicate, however, that the center programs were clearly "add ons" and would be deleted quickly if economic resources tightened. The need for students to travel appeared to be a barrier to access to some extent.

The schedule appeared bothersome to administrators and students. Schedules that require students to travel in the middle of the day are likely to be more disruptive than those in which travel is involved at the beginning or the end of the day. School schedules were not synchronized and this fact did not appear to be a problem.

The necessity for students to commit a year to enrollment in a center course was being questioned at the time of the study. Shorter enrollment periods would introduce more flexibility into students' schedules, but only if courses in their home schools were also a semester or quarter in length. The opportunity to enroll in two semester center programs in a year would be welcomed by students who are unsure about making a year's commitment to one course.

School rivalry between Backus and Pine River was cited as a factor in students' hesitance about taking courses together. The schools and communities differed considerably in size, Backus being considerably smaller than Pine River. The school districts also differed in their financial status. Pequot Lakes had a local economic base that was considerably higher than Pine River's, a discrepancy that resulted in a considerable difference in the amount of state aid received by each district.

While the intent was initially to offer center programs only to juniors and seniors, changes occurred in practice. A major change occurred when the agriculture course was offered specifically for ninth and tenth graders. Further, sophomores had been allowed to enroll in the foods occupations program primarily to assemble a sufficient number of students. No deleterious effects of this practice were reported.

Students enrolled in center courses were described in different ways, sometimes as the "cream of the crop" and almost exclusively as noncollege bound. The idea that center students were noncollege bound appeared to be pervasive. Descriptions of the communities as placing a low priority on education, and as having residents who needed skills to survive at a basic economic level, provided further insight as to the perceived destinations of students in these school districts.

Population density of the geographic area in which the Heartland Center was located was not great but distances between the communities was short enough to allow transportation of students for a two-hour block in the school day.

Center teachers appeared to be more a part of school district faculties than center faculty, not surprising considering that four of the five teachers taught part time in the center and had other responsibilities in their own districts. While this gave center-course teachers an opportunity to know their home school students well, it limited the opportunity to learn about their students who came from other communities.

Student organizations were difficult to run outside of class time because of the necessity for student transportation when students from two school districts were enrolled in a course. The issue of what name would be on the FFA jackets reflected the need of the

governance body to establish and promote the identity of the center and the strong identity students felt with their home community and school district. A center provides few vehicles for students to develop loyalties and identity with the center. These attitudes develop through mechanisms like sports or contributions to an organization on the part of the individual. Thus, the center remained for students a place to take courses rather than a fervor-inspiring organizational entity.

It did not appear that the superintendents had a role in the center apart from attending the regular board meetings in an ex-officio capacity. There was no report of their meeting together by themselves as a group with the vocational director.

Two types of committees involving community representatives should provide ample opportunity for community input and for information about the center to flow to the community. Yet, there were indications that neither the communities nor the school district knew much about center programs located in other participating districts.

With only two school districts participating and a total student enrollment of 100, administrative costs were proportionally high. The move to a part-time vocational director was a way of reducing administrative costs to a more reasonable proportion of the total center cost when the center began its operation on a smaller scale in 1979-80.

The commitment of one school district to the center appeared to be very strong compared to the second district where fewer center programs were located. The third district's level of commitment to the center was reflected in its withdrawal. This range in levels of commitment is pronounced in the Heartland case and appears to be, at least in part, related to facility location. Certainly other potential factors are also involved such as the lack of leadership at critical points in the center's history, economic resources available, etc.

The decentralized center appears to address the concerns of school districts for having a piece of the action but may, at the same time, compromise a degree of quality. Curriculum is broadened but access is limited by the transportation required for students located in other communities and scheduling conflicts with home courses. One strength of the decentralized center is its provision for a clear leadership role in development and initiatives regarding center programs. The most troublesome weaknesses include the necessity for students to travel, particularly in the middle of the day, and the different access to various programs for students in different school districts. The decentralized center appears to be a "middle of the road" model, modifying some of the disadvantages of the centralized center and the noncenter models but also modifying the advantages of those models of inter-school district cooperation.

Recommendations

Since the noncenter requires student or teacher transportation on a daily or almost daily basis, this model should be considered for settings where distances between cooperating school districts are relatively short to moderate. The decentralized center can lead to excessive distances between vocational programs and students. For example, if five schools are cooperating and the diameter of the geographic area between the two outermost locations is 40 miles, students from those two districts would have to travel 80 miles round trip to gain access to the program located in each other's districts. When selecting the locations of the programs in a decentralized center model, locating programs in the outermost regions of the geographic area should be discouraged if students in all districts are to have reasonable access to all programs.

In this model careful thought should be given to the potential trade-offs between program quality and the district's need to have "a piece of the action." The tendency to use existing facilities with little adaptation and existing staff, whose specialization in the area to be taught may be minimal, is a potentially serious limit to quality. On the other hand, the enthusiasm and support of school districts for the enterprise is critical

and, in some instances, if dispersed facilities engender a needed level of such attitudes, a decentralized model may be justified. There is some question about whether or not having a program located in one's school district is enough to engender support for the center. In the Heartland case, enthusiasm was lukewarm among some participants even with programs located in all sites. There may be other ways of obtaining needed support and cooperation that would avoid the quality trade-off. For example, giving school administrators a central and key role in the decision making process would be one such strategy.

Careful thought should also be given to supervision of center staff who are also employed part-time as teachers in one of the participating school districts. Lines of authority and responsibility for the school principal and the vocational director should be worked out ahead of time and clearly communicated to, and understood by, the school administration, the center administration, and the teachers involved.

The director of a decentralized center should be prepared for considerable travel if he or she is going to maintain adequate communication and contact with each of the sites and provide adequate supervision for the programs. Here is where a working agreement between the vocational director and the principals will be important to determine which problems will be dealt with by whom. Student discipline was one area where questions of responsibility arose in the Heartland case. A vocational director will have difficulty dealing personally with such issues in a decentralized center because of physical proximity to the problems when they occur, and principals may be reluctant to take on discipline problems that arise in center classes that may be perceived as the domain of another administrator.

The vocational director should give careful thought to a structure for providing collegial interaction and support for center teachers. Center teachers who are also employed by a school district are likely to find this in their school. Teachers who are not also employed by a school district may need help establishing links with other educators.

The variation of having teachers rather than students travel should be seriously studied, as well as the variation of having programs rotate to different schools on alternate years or semesters. The extent to which moving equipment between sites on a semester or yearly basis cuts the cost of duplicate facilities required for this variation should be explored. Such a variation would eliminate one of the more serious problems with the decentralized center--student transportation requirements--and would substantially reduce schedule conflicts for students. Further, such a variation would eliminate the problems of teachers' travel expense and time since teachers would not travel between schools. However, this variation would not address the problem of low student enrollments because students from participating districts would not be pooled.

Incorporation of technology into the delivery of instruction to students in different locations should be explored. For example, use of video tapes, computers, and even conference calls for discussion sessions should be tried as a way of reducing the number of days students would have to travel to another site.

The implications of various cost allocation formulas should be carefully thought through prior to adopting any formula or combination of formulas. A formula that imposes an equal share of the center costs on all districts may be worth considering seriously since it avoids the tendency for districts to compare each other in terms of contribution and benefits received. It also avoids a feeling of being taxed which formulas that remove a percentage of foundation aids from a district are more likely to engender.

Scheduling center programs the first two hours or the last two hours in the day should be considered as a strategy for minimizing scheduling conflicts for students and schools. Such a strategy would be plausible only when one section of each program is offered. Further, the consequence that students would be able to enroll in only one center program at a time should be considered. A variation of this strategy, which would reduce schedule conflicts even more, would be to reduce the length of center courses from two hours to one. The consequent impact on the program would need to be carefully considered against the

advantage for reducing scheduling conflicts such a strategy would have.

The integrated model for vocational student organization should be used in the decentralized center. This model integrates the student organization affairs and activities into classroom instruction. Student transportation requirements in this model make an after-school or evening schedule for student organizations unrealistic. The variation of the decentralized model discussed earlier, in which programs might be offered every other semester or year in a given district, would make providing a student organization more difficult.

The vocational director, the center board, and teachers need to think together about how to inform the community about center educational opportunities. Advisory groups are one strategy, but if they are to reach their full potential in informing the community, membership will need to represent the community: advisory groups are not a sufficient means of informing the community. A second information problem also needs to be considered and is particularly pertinent to the decentralized center--informing students about programs that are not located in their district. Ways of getting information to students in all participating schools are needed and will probably need to go beyond written information to be effective.

Scale should be also considered in the formation of a decentralized center. An adequate number of participants are needed to share the administrative and other center fixed costs and to ensure an adequate number of students. Two small schools, as in the Heartland case, are probably insufficient in terms of both costs and student numbers. Too many schools will involve too large a geographic area to make transportation between schools feasible. Four to six schools, depending on size and proximity, may provide just the right balance in terms of resources, students, and distance.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Bureau of the Census. General Social and Economic Characteristics of Minnesota. Vol. 43. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Laws of Minnesota for 1974, Ch. 252, 385-388.

Minnesota Demographer, State Planning Agency. Age Estimates for Minnesota Counties. St. Paul, April, 1979.

Minnesota Demographer, State Planning Agency. Population Estimates for Minnesota Counties, 1978. St. Paul, July, 1979.

Minnesota Demographer, State Planning Agency. Revised Population Projections for Minnesota Counties. St. Paul, May, 1979.

Minnesota Department of Economic Development. Community Profile, Pequot Lakes, Pine River, 1979.

Minnesota Department of Economic Security. Minnesota County Labor Force Estimates. St. Paul: Research and Statistics Services Office, January-December, 1979.

Minnesota Department of Education. School District Profiles, 1974-80.

Minnesota Department of Health. Minnesota Health Statistics, 1978.

Minnesota School Boards Association. Licensed Salaries and Related Information Report, 1977-79.

Peterson, R., Thomas, R., Haugen, J. and Rabideau, R. Approaches and Patterns for Delivering Agriculture and Home Economics Programs: A Conceptual Model Based on a Review of Related Literature. Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 545-1981. St. Paul: University of Minnesota, 1981.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. Minnesota Agricultural Statistics, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Population Estimates and Projections. Series P-25, Nos. 762 and 836. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Minnesota State and County Data - 1974 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Part 23. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977.

APPENDIX

HEARTLAND VOCATIONAL CENTER

Fiscal Year 1979-80

By-Laws

December 11, 1979

Be it resolved by the Heartland Vocational Center Governing Board that the following 1979-80 Fiscal Year By-Laws be Adopted.

MOTION BY _____

SECONDED BY _____

HEARTLAND VOCATIONAL COOPERATIVE CENTER #982
Amended Joint Agreement to Meet
Minnesota Laws 1974, Chapter 252

The agreement entered into on this 11th day of December, 1979, and between Independent School Districts numbered 114 (Backus Public School), 117 (Pine River Public School), and 186 (Pequot Lakes Public School) hereinafter referred to as "member districts."

Witnesseth that:

WHEREAS, the parties to this agreement have as one of their purposes the provision of vocational education to youth and adults, and

WHEREAS, if it is felt by each member district that this can best be accomplished by cooperative efforts, and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute, Section 471.59, authorizes the member districts to jointly or cooperatively exercise any power common to the contracting parties, and Minnesota Laws 1974, Chapter 252, passed after the beginning of the center authorizes cooperation by school districts to provide expanded vocational services and other educational services.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties to this agreement, pursuant to the authority and in accordance with the conditions specified in Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.59 and Minnesota Laws 1974, Chapter 252 hereby agree as follows:

1. PURPOSE OF AGREEMENT: The purpose of this agreement shall be to cooperate in order to provide for comprehensive vocational education within the geographical boundaries of member districts, including a variety of career clusters for senior high students, career exploration for all junior high students, orientation to the work world for students in kindergarten through grade 12, and vocational upgrading and retraining for adults.

2. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PURPOSE: The comprehensive vocational education program shall be accomplished by the creation of a governing board which shall, on behalf of the member districts, apply for, receive, and administer education funding including state and federal vocational reimbursement. The governing board shall administer these funds and exercise its authority in such a way as to accomplish the purpose of this agreement as set forth in paragraph one. This shall include the establishment of a vocational center which will offer vocational programs as provided for by the State Board of Education, and which shall be named The Heartland Vocational Cooperative Center #982 with an identification number to be assigned by the Commissioner of Education. The care, management, and control of the Vocational Cooperative Center shall be vested in the Governing Board.

3. A letter of agreement was adopted at the March 8th, 1979, meeting. Refer to Attachment E.

HEARTLAND VOCATIONAL COOPERATIVE CENTER #982
Resolution to Meet All Provisions of
Minnesota Laws 1974, Chapter 252 and
State Statute 471.59

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Heartland Vocational Cooperative Center #982 is to provide vocational education to youth and adults, and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Law 1974, Chapter 252 has been passed by the Minnesota Legislature to stabilize the series of Attorney General opinions and State Board for vocational education policies which have been developed to support Minnesota State Statute, Section 471.59 as it relates to vocational cooperative centers, therefore be it

RESOLVED that all provisions of Minnesota Law 1974, Chapter 252 shall be met beginning August 1, 1974, and be it further

RESOLVED that the following by-laws are established for the operation of the Heartland Vocational Cooperative Center #982 hereinafter referred to as the Heartland Vocational Center, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Center agreement and by-laws as amended today shall provide the basis for carrying out Minnesota Law 1974 in this center.

Adopted by the Heartland Vocational Center Governing Board on the 11th day of December, 1979.

_____ Chairman

_____ Clerk

HEARTLAND VOCATIONAL CENTER
By-Laws

Revised for Fiscal Year 1979-80

1. GOVERNING BOARD

a. The Heartland Vocational Center having been established under Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.59 as it relates to vocational centers, shall be governed by a board hereinafter referred to as the Governing Board of Directors.

b. This Governing Board shall function in a manner similar to a Board of Education of a Minnesota Independent School District.

c. The purpose of the Heartland Vocational Center Governing Board of Directors will be to provide vocational education to youth and adults in accordance with the joint agreement and resolution to meet all provisions of the Minnesota Law 1974, Chapter 252 which has been passed by the Minnesota Legislature to stabilize the series of Attorney General opinions and State Board for Vocational Education policies which have been developed to support State Statutes 471.59 as it relates to vocational centers.

A. ELECTION - MEMBERSHIP

a. The Board of Education of each member district shall elect two members to the Governing Board. These representatives shall be members of their district's Board of Education.

B. MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

a. Any person serving on the Governing Board must also be serving as a member of his district's Board of Education.

C. CERTIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP

a. A person appointed to the Heartland Vocational Center Governing Board shall qualify as a Governing Board member by filing with the chairman a written certificate of appointment from his school board. The certificate shall include the term of office of its representative and should be completed within five days after the election of the regular board meeting.

D. TERM OF OFFICE

a. The Board of Education of each member district shall elect its member to the Governing Board for a term of not less than one year, except when it fills a vacancy. If a vacancy occurs on the Center board, it shall be filled by the appropriate school board within 90 days.

1. No member of the Governing Board may serve after his term of office, set by his board, has expired and has not been extended.

2. No person may serve on the Governing Board when he ceases to be a legally qualified member of his district's Board of Education.

E. FISCAL YEAR

a. The fiscal year of the Heartland Vocational Center shall be from July 1 through the following June 30, the same as for an Independent School

District. The term of office for each Governing Board member shall coincide with the fiscal year.

F. VOTING POWERS

a. Each Governing Board member shall have one vote and this vote shall be cast at Governing Board meetings by the duly elected representative of his school district.

G. EX-OFFICIO - ADMINISTRATORS

a. A member school's designated administrator has the right and privilege to serve as a consultant or advisor to the duly elected representatives from their district and is an ex-officio member of the Governing Board. Ex-officio members may attend all Governing Board meetings. An individual serving as an ex-officio member does not have the power to vote.

H. EX-OFFICIO - VOCATIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR

a. The Vocational Program Director of the Heartland Vocational Center shall be an ex-officio member of the Governing Board and shall have the right and privilege to attend all Governing Board meetings. He does not have the right to vote.

I. VOCATIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR - EXECUTIVE OFFICER

a. The Vocational Program Director is the Executive Officer of the Governing Board and the Vocational Center and assumes the role of an educational consultant and administrative leader.

J. QUORUM

a. In order to conduct official business which requires Board action, a quorum must be present at all Board meetings. A quorum shall be defined as one-half the total membership on the board plus one. Example: If the Governing Board has a membership of six, the quorum would be four.

K. OFFICERS

a. Officers of the Governing Board shall be chairman, vice-chairman, clerk, and treasurer. They shall be elected by the Board for one-year terms.

b. The chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Governing Board except in his absence the vice-chairman shall preside. The clerk shall keep complete records of the minutes of each meeting and publish same or submit same to the Vocational Director's office for the publication within ten days after the meeting. The treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the center.

Insofar as applicable, Minnesota Statutes, Sections 123.33 and 123.34 shall apply to the board and officers of the center. If both the chairman and vice-chairman are absent, the Vocational Director shall appoint one of the Governing Board members to act as chairman. If the clerk or treasurer is absent, the chairman, vice-chairman or the Vocational Director shall appoint a Governing Board member to act as the substitute.

c. Members of the Board not identified as the aforementioned officers shall be referred to as Directors.

L. ANNUAL MEETING

a. The Governing Board shall hold an annual meeting in July. This is the reorganizational meeting and new officers shall take office.

M. MEETING DATES

a. The regular monthly meeting shall be held on the second Thursday of each month unless cancelled or postponed by Board action.

1. A Governing Board meeting may be cancelled or postponed by agreement between the Supervising Superintendent and the Vocational Program Director.

2. A Governing Board meeting may be cancelled or postponed by agreement between the Board Chairman and the Vocational Program Director.

3. A Governing Board meeting may be cancelled by the Vocational Program Director due to inclement weather such as a snowstorm, tornado, or similar severe storm and notice shall be given to members by telephone.

4. Cancellations of meetings or postponements as described in items 1 and 2 shall require written or telephone notice at least three days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting if at all possible. This notice shall come from the office of the Vocational Director.

N. SPECIAL MEETINGS

a. Special meetings of the Governing Board may be called by the Chairman of the Governing Board or the Vocational Program Director whenever a meeting is deemed necessary.

b. A special meeting may be called whenever three or more Governing Board members require such a meeting. The request must be in writing and submitted by a member district Governing Board representative to the Vocational Program Director.

c. Notice for special Governing Board meetings should be given three days in advance to the members of the Governing Board. If the three days notice for a special meeting is impossible, the Vocational Center Governing Board should sign a waiver of the three-day notice which will be acted upon at the meeting in question.

II. A. POWERS & DUTIES OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

a. The Vocational Center Governing Board may have the general charge of the business of the Center and the ownership of facilities. Where applicable, Minnesota Statutes, Section 123.36, shall apply. The Center Board may not issue bonds in its behalf. Each participating district may issue its bonds for the purpose of acquisition and betterment of Center facilities in the amount certified by the Center Board to such participating district in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 475.

b. The Center Board (1) may furnish vocational offerings to any eligible person residing in any participating district and (2) may provide special education for the handicapped and disadvantaged.

c. In accordance with Section II, Part D, Paragraph b, the Vocational Center Board shall certify to each participating district the amount of funds

assessed to the district as its proportionate share required for the conduct of the educational programs, payment of indebtedness, and all other proper expenses of the Center.

d. The Center Board shall employ and contract necessary qualified teachers and administrators and may discharge the same for cause pursuant to Section 125.12. The Board may employ and discharge other necessary employees and may contract for other services deemed necessary.

   1. The Director's contract shall be for a period of fifty-two weeks which include twenty workdays of paid vacation, legal paid holidays, and with fringe benefits. For the 1979-80 school year, administrative services shall be provided by the Woodland Cooperative Center 952. (See attachment C).

   2. The Governing Board shall determine a rotating schedule for the Administrative headquarters of the Vocational Center. (See attachment A, part I).

e. The Center Board may provide an educational program for high school and adult vocational phases of instruction. The high school phase of its educational program shall be offered as a component of the comprehensive curriculum offered by each of the participating school districts. Graduation shall be from the student's resident high school district. Insofar as applicable, Minnesota Statutes, Sections 123.35 and 123.40 shall apply.

f. Students shall be accepted into Heartland Vocational Center programs on the basis of need for the program. If all students seeking a Vocational program cannot be served, students shall enter the program on the basis of the same percentages used for assessment of local costs. Each student shall be subject to regulations of the Heartland Vocational Center and of the school district which he is a resident. Students must abide by the travel rules to a Vocational class as set by the Vocational Program Director and the Governing Board.

B. BY-LAWS

a. Adopt By-Laws to govern its operation.

C. RECORD KEEPING

a. Establish a record keeping system and financial system separate from any of the member districts.

D. POWERS AND DUTIES BY CONTRACT, FINANCING OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

a. Any center board established pursuant to this act is a public corporation and agency and may receive and disburse federal, state, and local funds made available to it. No participating school district shall have an additional individual liability for the debts or obligations of the center except that assessment which has been certified as its proportionate share in accordance with Part D, Paragraph b, and Section II, Paragraphs a and c. A member of the center board shall have such liability as is applicable to a member of an independent school district board. Any property, real or personal, acquired or owned by the center board for its purposes shall be exempt from tax by the state or any of its political subdivisions.

b. The center board may, in each year, for the purpose of paying any administrative, planning, operating, or capital expenses incurred or to be incurred, assess and certify to each participating school district its

proportionate share of any and all expenses. This share shall be based upon an equitable distribution formula agreed upon by the participating districts and approved by the state commissioner of education with approval by the state board of vocational education. Each participating district shall remit its assessment to the center board within 30 days after receipt. The assessments shall be paid within the maximum levy limitations of each participating district.

c. The transfer by member districts to the Governing Board of State Foundation Aids received for the time each student participates in the joint program. (See Attachment A, Part II).

d. Aid and reimbursements received by the Governing Board.

e. Payments to the Governing Board by member districts based upon resident district student population, grades 7-12, and described in the By-Laws of the Governing Board. (See attachment A, Part III).

f. The center board may prescribe rates of tuition for attendance in its programs by adults and nonmember district secondary student.

E. BENEFITS FOR MEMBER DISTRICTS

a. Nothing in our agreements, by-laws, or policies shall prevent any member district from applying separately for any benefits to which it may itself be entitled.

F. STATE BOARD APPROVAL

a. Prior to the commencement of the operation of any center the agreement entered into by participating districts shall be approved by the state board of education.

G. LAWS GOVERNING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS APPLICABLE

a. As of the effective date of the creation of any center as contained in the agreement establishing the center, the organization, operation, maintenance, the conduct of the affairs of the center shall be governed by the general laws relating to independent school districts of the state unless provided otherwise herein or by statute passed hereafter.

H. ADDITION OF DISTRICTS

a. Upon approval by majority vote of a school board, of the center board, and of the state board of education, an adjoining school district may become a member in the center and be governed by the provision of this act and the agreement in effect.

I. WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBER DISTRICTS

a. Any participating district may withdraw from the center and from the agreement in effect by a majority vote of the full board membership of the participating school district desiring withdrawal and upon compliance with provisions in the agreement establishing the center. Upon receipt of the withdrawal resolution reciting the necessary facts the center board shall file a certified copy with the county auditors of the counties affected. The withdrawal shall become effective at the end of the next following school year. The withdrawing district must submit a request to withdraw to the State Board of Education. Notification of withdrawal must be received one year in advance of withdrawal and will become effective the end of the fiscal year. Example: The center

board must be notified no later than June 30, 1979, if the district plans to withdraw on July 1, 1980. The withdrawal shall not affect the continued liability of the withdrawing district for bonded indebtedness it incurred prior to the effective withdrawal date.

b. For one year any vocational aids due the Vocational Center from the withdrawing district after the date of withdrawal for students who attended the Vocational Center shall be forwarded to the Governing Board upon receipt thereof by the district.

c. Any equipment donated by the withdrawing district or procured solely by the withdrawing district for the center's use shall be returned to the withdrawing district or may be purchased by the center at its depreciated value. If categorical funding was used the withdrawing district and center must satisfy property management standards of the State Rules and Regulations (1.0079 Attachment D).

d. Reimbursements or categorical aids for that share of equipment or other capital outlay equity obtained through categorical aids will be retained by the center, or returned to the State Board in accordance with State Board of Education Rules and Regulations.

e. Equipment or other capital outlay property will be retained by the Center, unless agreed upon by the Governing Board of the remaining districts to do differently. The withdrawing district will be reimbursed for its share of the depreciated value of the equipment based on its average proportionate participation percent to the center support, after categorical aids have been deducted from the total expenditures for that school year. Property Management Standards (1.0079) will be adhered to.

f. Those items listed under Secondary, Instruction, and Operation of plant in the center's budget will remain the property of the center and no part refunded to a withdrawing district.

g. The withdrawing district shall be financially responsible for its proportionate participation percent until its withdrawal becomes effective. Any other funds, so earmarked as to accrue to a single district, shall be refunded to the withdrawing district.

J. EXISTING CENTERS

a. Centers operating pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.59 which have been approved by the State Board of Education prior to the effective date of this act shall be subject to its provisions except Section 1, Subdivision 1.

Any changes in the center agreements necessary to comply with this act shall be completed within twelve months after the effective date of this act and filed with the state board by the administrator of each center. Centers operating pursuant to laws 1967, Chapter 822, as amended, Laws 1969, Chapter 775, as amended, and Laws 1969, Chapter 1060, as amended, shall not be subject to the provisions of this act.

K. DISSOLUTION

a. This agreement shall continue in force until the majority of the remaining member school districts shall mutually agree to terminate this agreement and dissolve the Governing Board. Upon dissolution of the Governing Board all of the property and remaining funds shall be divided among all remaining member districts at the time of dissolution. Distribution shall be determined on the basis of the resident student population of each district, the number of years

of participation by each district, and the proportionate contribution made pursuant to this agreement by the districts. Property Management Standards of the Rules and Regulations (1.0079) shall be adhered to, in so far as determining value of equipment meeting (b) and (c). The Governing Board shall determine the disposition of items meeting criteria (a).

b. The HVC building in Pine River shall be retained by the Pine River Board of Education as set forth in Board Resolution.

III. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

a. Select an Executive Committee composed of the chairman of the Governing Board, the Local Vocational Program Director, and the Supervising Superintendent.

1. FUNCTIONS

a. The Executive Committee shall function as an interim body to serve as advisory to the center and the Director whenever this assistance as service is deemed necessary by the Director, the Supervising Superintendent, or the Board.

IV. GOVERNING BOARD - LEGISLATIVE POWERS

a. The Governing Board shall perform its duties and functions similar to those of an Independent School District and shall be subject to regulations and conditions contained in the contracts with member districts.

V. GOVERNING BOARD - DECISIONS

a. All decisions made by the Governing Board shall be approved by a single majority of the quorum present unless otherwise stated in other sections of the By-Laws. This includes also the annual budget or any revisions or modifications to the budget. A quorum shall be required for board action.

VI. GOVERNING BOARD - REFERENCE TO THE BUDGET

a. The annual budget or any revisions or modifications of the budget must be approved by a majority vote of the Governing Board present at a meeting.

VII. GOVERNING BOARD - ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIRED

a. No revision or adoption of a budget shall be made at any Governing Board meeting unless the members of the Board have been mailed a notice by the Vocational Director or his staff at least five days in advance of the meeting.

VIII. GOVERNING BOARD - AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES PRIOR TO BUDGET APPROVAL

a. The Governing Board shall authorize the Vocational Program Director to expend funds prior to the finalization and approval of the budget, so as not to impede or delay programming and implementation of vocational programs and courses.

IX. BUDGET APPROVAL - AUTHORIZES DIRECTOR TO EXPEND FUNDS

a. After the budget is adopted, the Vocational Program Director may expend funds and purchase needed supplies, equipment, and necessary items to administer the Vocational Center and is limited to the total estimated budget unless changes are approved by the Governing Board.

X. CONTRACTS WITH FISCAL AGENT OR THE FISCAL DISTRICT

a. The Governing Board may contract with a member district to perform fiscal services for the center.

b. The Governing Board may authorize the Vocational Program Director to negotiate and arrange for fiscal services, including fringe benefits and other insurance for Vocational Center, the Governing Board, students, and staff. This includes contracting for insurance coverage such as Workmen's Compensation, Medical-Hospital Liability and is not restricted to the coverages mentioned.

XI. CONTRACT FOR INSURANCE

a. The Governing Board shall procure such insurance it deems appropriate and necessary for all members of its staff and the activities of the Vocational Center.

XII. AMENDING OF THE BY-LAWS BY GOVERNING BOARD

a. The By-Laws may be amended by the Governing Board if all procedures published in the By-Laws are completed. No changes to the By-Laws shall be permitted when they are in conflict with the member district contracts, Minnesota Statutes, and the Minnesota State Department of Education and State Board of Education regulations.

XIII. AMENDING OF THE BY-LAWS - ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIRED

a. Any proposed changes to the By-Laws must be made known to the members of the Governing Board not less than five days prior to the Board meeting, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays included. This advance notice of the proposed revisions, additions, or deletions, of the By-Laws must be mailed to the Governing Board members by the Vocational Director or the Chairman of the Governing Board.

XIV. AMENDING OF THE BY-LAWS - VOTE REQUIRED

a. The By-Laws may be amended by not less than a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Governing Board.

XV. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

a. The Heartland Vocational Center Governing Board, Director, and staff recognize that a Center is a cooperative venture which needs close cooperation with the communities served. Therefore, it follows that interested citizens may provide valuable assistance by serving on committees, purely advisory in nature, so that the vocational programming shall be meaningful, relevant, and in tune with the times. Each advisory committee shall meet at least twice a year.

XVI. STEERING COMMITTEE

a. A steering committee shall be appointed by the Governing Board. Members of this committee shall represent a diversity of occupations. At least one member of the recommended six members of the Steering Committee shall represent a post secondary institution.

b. The role of this committee is to advise the Governing Board and the Vocational Center staff as to comprehensive planning for meeting student needs and employment needs. The committee has no legislative or decision making authority. Whenever a member of the Steering Committee represents the occupation served by a program advisory committee, he may serve on the Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee and shall act as liaison between the two committees. The Vocational Director has the authority to appoint two members to this committee. The Steering Committee shall meet at least once a year.

XVII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE - DEPARTMENTAL - MEMBERSHIP

a. An Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Governing Board for each career cluster offered through the Heartland Vocational Center. Each Advisory Committee, with recommended membership of no less than four members, shall meet at least twice a year and advise staff on programs offered through the Vocational Center. One member of each Advisory Committee, unless unavailable, shall be from a post-secondary institute. The Vocational Director shall be a member of each Advisory Committee, but shall not serve as an officer.

XVIII. VOCATIONAL DIRECTOR - DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. He shall administer and develop vocational programs for the center and be responsible to the Governing Board and subject to the Minnesota Statutes and the regulations of the Minnesota State Department of Education Vocational-Technical Division.

A. Among some of his duties are the recruitment of instructors, coordinators, supervisors, and any other staff necessary to initiate and implement and conduct vocational classes. He shall be responsible in the preparation of recommendations and programs to the Board. He shall examine and evaluate any type of rental (building) facility, equipment and any lease-purchase type of structure or equipment for the operation of the center.

B. It shall be his responsibility to attend Vocational meetings called by the State Department of Education or any other meetings pertinent and/or beneficial or related to the operation of vocational programs in the center.

C. The Vocational Program Director shall provide in-service, pre-inservice teacher training; assist staff members in preparing a course of study, have the power and authority such as that of a superintendent or principal in providing supervision and requiring lesson plans, reports, and the staff's supervision of students in the vocational program when requested to supervise students on field trips and out of the usual class setting.

D. The Vocational Center Director is responsible to the Governing Board and owes no special allegiance or obligation to any one particular district.

E. The Vocational Center Director may attend any educational meetings that may be of benefit to the Center and shall attend state-called meetings and association meetings in the vocational area.

F. See job description (Attachment B).

XIX. STAFF-EMPLOYMENT

a. The Vocational staff and any office staff shall be under the direct supervision and control of the Vocational Program Director. The Vocational Program Director shall make staff appointments subject to any advice and regulations of the Governing Board and the Vocational Divisions of the Minnesota State Department of Education.

A. The Governing Board shall hire employees in the manner prescribed by statute for Independent School Districts. In addition, the Governing Board may make cooperative agreements with member districts concerning working relationships between the staffs of the Vocational Center and the member districts, in order to provide for an efficient integrated Career Education system.

B. The fringe benefits of the Heartland Vocational Center shall be determined by the Governing Board and/or the Governing Board may make cooperative agreements with member districts concerning fringe benefits. Fringe benefits will be specifically stated and approved and published in the designated official newspaper by the Governing Board and the director.

C. The Vocational Program Director is delegated the same power as a superintendent has over the interpretation and evaluation of sick leave, emergency leave, and absences and other matters of employment.

D. The salary schedule of the Heartland Vocational Center may be on a contract basis with member districts upon the approval of the Governing Board. The member school in which the satellite vocational program is located shall issue the contracts. Approved contracts will be published in the designated official newspaper by the Governing Board and the Director.

The Vocational Program Director has latitude in recommending beginning salary and adjusting salaries based on clock hours, expertise, training, and competencies so that in order that high caliber staff may be employed.

XX. STAFF - DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The staff shall be required to comply with all directives for reporting, supervision, control and safety precautions as outlined by the Vocational Program Director and the Governing Board.

A. The staff shall be required to up-date their training as suggested and directed by the Vocational Program Director and the State Department of Education.

B. The vocational staff shall attend staff meetings as requested and directed by the Vocational Program Director and attend state-called vocational meetings when so directed by the Vocational Program Director.

C. Staff members attending meetings that have been approved by the Director shall be required to fill out forms itemizing their expenses and signing the claim for reimbursements. Unless otherwise specified, the mileage rate shall be the same mileage rate as that of the fiscal district of the Center.

Whenever possible, staff members will try to use one vehicle, or upon staff growth, make every attempt to reduce the number of vehicles to a meeting to the same site so that travel funds are expended judiciously.

D. The Vocational Program Director may approve travel to vocational meetings, to other centers, and to visit and observe other educational programs that may be of interest and benefit to the Heartland Vocational Center.

E. The Vocational staff shall comply with the state regulations and the state plan governing certification and exceptions can be made with state approval.

F. The instructional staff shall be responsible for all equipment and supplies in each department and the Director shall have the responsibility of outlining and enforcing regulations relative to such equipment and supplies.

G. The Vocational Program Director shall outline to each instructor the length of the school day and requirements for daily hours. The vacation schedules and school calendar of the fiscal agents district shall prevail unless modified by the Governing Board.

H. Youth groups, such as identified and approved by the State Department of Education, and related to certain disciplines, shall be a part of each instructor's responsibilities. These youth groups shall not be considered as extra curricular.

ATTACHMENT A

HEARTLAND VOCATIONAL CENTER
Governing Board of Directors
Term of Office
1979-80

BACKUS	PINE RIVER	PEQUOT LAKES
Robert Turner 3 Year Term Expiration Date 1982	Arthur Gensmer 3 Year Term Expiration Date 1981	Patricia Dullum 3 Year Term Expiration Date 1980
Bonnie Hockett 2 Year Term Expiration Date 1981	Richard Tappe 2 Year Term Expiration Date 1980	Gilroy Arvig 3 Year Term Expiration Date 1982

OFFICERS

Chairman . . . . . Robert Turner

Vice-Chairman . . . . . Arthur Gensmer

Clerk . . . . . Bonnie Hockett

Treasurer . . . . . Richard Tappe

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Robert Turner
Wendell Tollefson
James Hofer

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Superintendents: Robert Taraldson
Wendell Tollefson
Vernon Dowty

Executive Officer: James Hofer

ATTACHMENT A

Part I

A tentative rotation schedule for the administrative headquarters be as discussed at the June 11, 1974, Governing Board Meeting.

Part II

FOUNDATION AIDS

The Heartland Vocational Center receives Foundation Aids from its member schools based on the number of hours a student spends in Center conducted classes in relation to the total number of hours in the student's day at school.

Example: Secondary Student

1. Foundation aids received by a district for student ($450 x 1.4) = $630
2. Length of student's school day ---------- = 6 hrs.
3. Time student spends at Vocational Center ---------- = 2 hrs.
4. One-half of preparation period for instruction ---------- = 1/2 hr.
5. Foundation Aid received by Vocational Center is 2.5/6 x $630 = $262.50

Part III

PAYMENTS BY MEMBER DISTRICTS

Student enrollment figures for each member school, for grades 7-12 will be taken from the most recent Minnesota Educational Directory or the registration enrollment as of October 1 of the current school year. This percent figure will then be multiplied times the amount expended for vocational programming after vocational aids have been deducted from the cost of the program. This is the local district's share of the vocational program. Example:

School	7-12 Enrollment	Percentage of Local District Share
A	200	.20
B	300	.30
C	500	.50
	1000	

If Center's total budget is $20,000 (after Vocational Aids are deducted)

School A pays	$ 4,000
School B pays	$ 6,000
School C pays	$ 10,000

ATTACHMENT B

HEARTLAND VOCATIONAL CENTER
Local Program Director
Job Description

The Heartland Vocational Center Director shall:

1. Be the executive officer of the Heartland Vocational Center Governing Board and shall be responsible to it for the execution of its policies and the observance of its rules.

2. Be an ex-officio member of the Governing Board and shall attend all regular and special meetings of that Board.

3. Represent the Governing Board in dealing with the Heartland Vocational Center staff.

4. Be responsible for all vocational programs and personnel reimbursements by Federal and State Vocational Funds.

5. Recruit teachers, coordinators, and supervisors and recommend to the Governing Board and superintendents for the appointment or reappointment of all personnel under his supervision.

6. Evaluate the Heartland Vocational Center instructional staff periodically.

7. Provide effective articulation of all levels of programming within the Center and immediate area.

8. Prepare brochures for general distribution, visit surrounding schools, confer with school superintendents, principals, counselors, and prospective students.

9. Provide pre-service and inservice teacher training.

10. Assist Vocational teachers in preparing a course of study and planned lessons.

11. Recommend to the Governing Board an itemized budget in October of each year.

12. Requisition and recommend purchase of equipment, supplies, instructional materials, and other items needed for the effective operation of a vocational program.

13. Be responsible for all vocational reports--financial, statistical, and descriptive--required by the Federal and State of Minnesota Vocational Departments.

14. Prepare a monthly Heartland Vocational Center report containing pertinent information about all Vocational Center affairs, recommendations for the Board's consideration, financial report and the agenda for the monthly Board meetings.

15. Audit all claims and approve all bills and submit to the Governing Board for its consideration.

16. Audit and approve all payrolls for the Heartland Vocational Center staff.

17. Arrange such office hours as may be necessary for the successful administration of the Heartland Vocational Center and convenience of the public.

18. Consult the executive Governing Board for advice in an emergency who in turn may consult the members of the entire Governing Board.

19. Promote good public relations through publications, speeches, news media, and the use of Vocational Advisory Committees.

20. Periodically provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program by means of follow-up of students in the area of education, job placement, and the consultation with post-high school counselors and with industries that are employing the students.

21. Keep himself and the Governing Board informed concerning educational progress and visiting the school districts, circulating questionnaires, attending educational meetings, workshops, conventions, short courses, and by reading educational books, pamphlets, and magazines.

22. Be responsible for all Adult Education registration and total operation and articulation of the Adult program through the Heartland Vocational Center.

    A. Work with a representative from each school district in establishing and operating an Adult program within that district.

    B. Offer adult programs both in the fall and winter quarters beginning in mid-September and January of each year.

    C. Be responsible for all Adult Education registration and total operation and articulation of the Adult program through the Heartland Vocational Center.

ATTACHMENT C

CONTRACT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES

The Contract shall be between the Governing Board of the Woodland Cooperative Center 952 and the Governing Board of the Heartland Cooperative Center 982, for the purpose of providing administrative service from Woodland Center to the Heartland Center.

1) Such arrangement shall begin July 1, 1979 and end June 30, 1980.

2) Such arrangement shall be continued upon mutual vote of both Governing Boards before May 31, 1980.

3) The Heartland Cooperative Center shall reimburse the Woodland Center for 40% (equivalent to 2 days per week) of the Directors salary, fringe benefits, and administrative travel.

4) Travel to the Heartland Center and member schools shall be reimbursed directly by the Heartland Center Governing Board at the appropriate rate.

5) The Heartland Cooperative Center Governing Board shall provide appropriate liability insurance.

Chairman, Woodland Cooperative Center

Chairman, Heartland Coop. Center

Date: _____

Date: _____

1.0079 - Property Management Standards

A. A uniform property management system shall be utilized by the districts and centers to:

1. Maintain individual item control for continuing verification on nonexpendable personal property in which the state board for vocational education has provided state and/or federal funds.

2. Maintain a source of information for future purchasing and capital budgeting for nonexpendable personal property, long-term capital financing and program cost computing.

B. Standards and procedures governing ownership, use and disposition of nonexpendable personal property purchased whole or in part with state funds and in which there are no federal funds as set forth below:

1. Title will not be taken by the state board for vocational education, but shall be vested in the local education agency subject to the following restrictions on use and disposition of the property:

a. Nonexpendable personal property with an acquisition cost of less than $500 and used four years or more: the local education agency may divert the property to any approved vocational program, vocational administration or support service or sell the property and retain the proceeds for vocational education programs.

b. All other nonexpendable personal property with an acquisition cost of $1,000 or less: the local education agency may use the property for its intended vocational-technical purpose. If approved vocational-technical use of the property is discontinued or the property is sold or diverted in some other manner, the state board for vocational education is to be credited with its proportionate share of the current fair market value of the property. The current fair market value shall be determined by the sale price in the case of a bona fide sale or by a third party appraisal in the case of some other diversion. The state board for vocational education's proportionate share of the property shall be computed by applying the percentage of state funding participation in the property to the current fair market value of the property.

c. Nonexpendable personal property with an acquisition cost of over $1,000: if the property is not needed for its intended vocational-technical purpose, the local education agency shall request disposition instructions from the commissioner of education. If instructions are not received within 90 days, the local education agency may dispose of the property at their discretion.

2. A physical inventory of nonexpendable personal property shall be taken by the local education agency and the results reconciled with the local education agency property records at least once every two years to verify the existence, current utilization, and continued need for the property.

3. Property records shall be retained for three years after final disposition of the property.

4. The commissioner of education or his authorized representative shall have access to any pertinent property records for the purpose of making examination.

C. In addition, when personal property is purchased whole or in part with federal funds furnished by the state board for vocational education, the local education agency shall comply with the appropriate code of federal regulations regarding standards and procedures governing ownership, use and disposition of personal property.

ATTACHMENT E

It is mutually agreed between members of the Heartland Vocational Cooperative Center Governing Board that Pequot Lakes will function in the 1979-80 school year as a non-participating member under the following conditions:

(a) That the center would discontinue sponsorship of Recreational Vehicles and Auto Mechanics.

(b) There would be no center sponsorship of students from or to Pequot Lakes.

(c) No direct administrative service would be provided to Pequot Lakes.

(d) The $6,000 deficit in capital outlay would cease to be an obligation of the Pequot Lakes district.

(e) Pro rata cost for the 1979-80 school year would not be billed to Pequot Lakes.

(f) Pequot Lakes would be entitled to representation at Board Meetings in 1979-80.

The above agreement was unanimously agreed upon at the March 8, 1979, Regular Meeting of the Heartland Vocational Cooperative Center Governing Board.